



# St. Lawrence County Fire Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes - April 18th, 2024

Meeting Call to order at 5:56 PM by Chairman Joe Finnegan

Attendance:

Adrian Bush	Excused	Kevin Crosby	Present
Arthur Howie	Resigned	Larry Denesha (Leg Rep)	Present
Bob Crowe	Present	Larry Whitton	Present
Bob Kerr	Present	Mark Bradish	
Chris Sherwin		Mark Bomyea	Excused
Chris Velez		Rick Rusaw	Present
Erick Johnson	Present	Scott McRobbie	Excused
Joe Finnegan (Chair)	Present	Steve Parker	Excused
Chris Backus	Present	Steve Wilson	Present
John Lashomb		Tom Conklin	Present
Matt Denner (Director)	Present	Jeff Hammond	Present
Vinny Ferry	Present	Dave Taylor	Present
Ken Stull	Excused		

Motion made by Erick Johnson to approve 12/21/2023 meeting minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jeff Hammond. Motion passes with all in favor.

Matt Denner introduces St. Lawrence County Office of Emergency Services Secretary, Desirée Deon. Permission granted for Desirée to attend both Fire Advisory Board and EMS Advisory Board meetings and to take meeting minutes if all in favor. Members in attendance introduce themselves.

## Reports

**SLC Bd. Of Legislators** – Liaison from Board of Legislators - Larry Denesha

- Renovations to PSC: Making good progress on the second-floor, fire suppression system installed, demo has begun in the basement. Should have no issue meeting the fall deadline.
- Public Hearing for cell phone surcharge: Recently brought forth a resolution to the Board of Legislators asking for a local law to be enacted that imposes a 30-cent surcharge for all cell phones with addresses in St. Lawrence County. St. Lawrence and Hamilton Counties are the only two in NY State that do not collect a surcharge. Cell phones account for 77% of EMS calls in St. Lawrence County.
- **Action:** Desirée will compose a new letter to present to the Board of Legislators about this issue.
- **Statistics from the Sheriff's Office and Drug Task Force:**

	January 1, 2020 – March 18, 2024	January 1, 2024 – March 18, 2024
Felony Arrests	661	57
Money Seized	\$2,282,711	\$4,600
Cocaine/Crack	17,182 g	252 g
(Street Value)	\$1,718,200	\$25,200
Heroin/Fentanyl	53,846 packets	5,780 packets
(Street Value)	\$538,460	\$57,800
Meth	3,720 g	94 g
(Street Value)	\$260,400	\$6,580
Overdoses Reported	422	22
Overdose Deaths	47	3



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- **Question:** What happens to the money that is being seized?
- **Answer:** Federal government and State agencies distribute money, often used to purchase new equipment.
- **Airboat Update:** Collectively, the Fire Advisory Board (twice) voted against the purchase of an airboat as the Board feels the money should be spent elsewhere, specifically on radios for departments throughout the County. Board of Legislators voted 9-6 in favor of the purchase of an airboat for the Sheriff's Office. Concerns expressed: needing qualified individuals trained in operation of the boat, the County having to possess a vehicle capable of towing it, whether the boat is sufficient for search and rescue, and that in the event of an emergency, it may take too long to get the boat to where it is needed, due to the large size of St. Lawrence County.
- **Question:** Can we have Dave Taylor speak about the boat and explain how it is suitable for search and rescue?
- **Answer (Dave Taylor):** Search and rescue is needed most in the winter on ice that is quite a distance from the shore. Aluminum rescue boats are very cold and not a lot of room to work in them. The airboat in question allows enough room for both rescue and EMS personnel to work and even allows for conversation. It is set up with dual monitors: one for the operator of the boat, and the other for grid display and navigation. The boat has a reinforced, fiberglass hull, a cover, a heater, and warming blankets. The design of the boat allows for it to cut through waves in the water, unlike aluminum boats, which are tossed around. It's an all-weather, all-purpose boat that is great for rescue operations. Boat quoted for \$155,000 including ropes, anchors and an additional \$55,000 for options outfitted. Has carpet, may need to alter to make it a non-slip surface.
- **Question:** Is there storage for the boat?
- **Answer:** Not sure, Sheriff does not have any indoor storage.

### Office of Emergency Services

Fire, EMS, Police Call Reports (emailed prior)

Communications Project

- New Radio system
  - After speaking to fire departments and Motorola, Matt believes there will be enough radios for the County.
- FCC Licenses
  - Short a few. Conducted over-air testing with Montreal, Massena, and Parishville. Count test heard on speakerphone, not on radio. We received six licenses. TDMA time delay; doubles talk paths (12).
- New Tower sites
  - Potsdam- No bids the first round, put back out a second time, will reach out for bidders.
  - Cranberry Lake- Balloon test done 4/17/24
  - Star Lake- Balloon test end of the month. Trying to compromise: staff does not want anything above the trees, they have to be above the trees. Route 56 to Sevey's Corners to South Colton and Wanakena are biggest areas of concern. Proposed tower at 140 feet: County Attorney will present permit application that either will be accepted or will go to full board to be reviewed (45 days).
  - NYPA- all required info sent over in 2019 STILL WAITING.



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## Command unit

- Radios: installed.
- Phones: Installed.
- Encoder: needs to be configured.
- Decals: won't happen until moved back to Canton.  
Alerts were sent out through CAD, not tones, but hopefully fixed today so we can tone out from UCV.

## 911 Dispatch

- Still in Massena.
- New radio being installed, waiting on fiber connection to be established.  
Massena will be completely digital.
- Support letter for surcharge in 2017: already discussed.

## County Fire

- Bio-Data sheets
  - Parker: received today.
  - McRobbie: will be sent out.
- Active shooter drills coming up
  - Arconic-4/17/24  
Went very well, take notes on how it went, how to make it better, what to work on. Some schools hesitant, others are eager to be involved.
  - United Helpers-table top
  - County Court House-August
  - MCI Training- 3 districts done
- District meetings in first quarter
  - Done all but 1
- Class beginning of year for new fire chiefs?
  - NIFERS
  - Scene preservation
  - On job injuries / WC
  - How to use radio?
  - LMS
  - Training for chiefs
  - When to call Stand by mutual aid

## Emergency Management

- Solar Eclipse 4/8/23  
St. Lawrence and neighboring Counties were prepared. Took ten months to plan. Incident command post set up in Star Lake. St. Lawrence County down to Cortland and Cayuga Counties were talking on portable radios in EOCs.
- Rave software
- **Question:** Any movement on mapping suggestions?
- **Answer:** Planning and Real Property have asked for training, very expensive (\$200,000-\$300,000). Motorola would charge \$75,000 to fix what we have. Planning, Real Property, and IT are trying to get a third party vendor involved to help and will be setting up a meeting.
- **Chris Backus:** Created a map for remote Cranberry Lake camps only accessible by boat. Brought to Real Property three times but cannot get it added to the system to help with dispatching to the correct address.



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- Rapid SOS map may help. Eagle Eye Rapid SOS is a new program that allows 911 limited access to cameras (selected by the person that signs up) in an emergency.

### OFPC Report - FPS George Massaroti

- Could not make it tonight, having trouble filling his position.

### Training Schedule Updates – Bob Crow

- De-con class / kits: Two-hour class, will come out to a department. First time a member takes a class, one Decon kit will be given out.
- Instructors scheduling a meeting in May: training desires, what people are looking for. Will take us to mid to late fall through winter.
- RAVE will have alerts for fire.
- Safety officer for certain units is required.
- One full-time and two part-time skills people anticipated.
- Course with live fire 1403 standard.

### Training Center – Bob Kerr

- BEFO full class, Alcoa refresher: need EMS support.
- Getting ready for summer, some maintenance needed.

### Fire Investigation Team – Tom Conklin

- 2024- 19 investigations so far, two calls dropped.
- 12 active members, two apprentices (Grant & Johnson).
- Blazestack software is helping to make reports uniform and to not omit information (must check boxes). Would like to speak with a rep from Blazestack to go over a few things when available.

### SLC Hazmat Response Team – Matt Denner

- Propane flare training done in September.
- Water injection kit has arrived.
- Dry Decon kits: plenty available.
- Ammonia training: June.
- Hydrogen training? --Haven't met with them yet.

### Dive/Rescue Team – Dave Taylor

- Swift Water Operations class: Colton, in May, full with waiting list.
- Surface Ice class Waddington, January, well attended.
- Air Boat purchased for Sheriff Office: already discussed.
- Waddington Fire Department starting a dive team (8 divers) with a grant from the Power Authority. Will work with Parishville and Massena.
- Need a second coordinator: Dave recommended a dive master/instructor from Massena. Need to form a committee to look for other candidates.



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Technical Rescue – Tyler Mulvenna Car 26

- Hopefully conduction joint training with Franklin County soon: technical rescue (grain bin, collapse, tower, etc.).
- Manure pit training.
- Four grain bin kits in the county now.
- Waiting on legislation to pass at the State level requiring a placard on oxygen-limiting silos.

## Old Business

- Minimum standards for officer's recommendation- pushing officers to take the classes.
- District de-con teams discussion.
- Tanker task force update.
- One open seat left to fill: Art Howie resignation.

## New Business

- Deputy Director Search update: Eight candidates interviewed by five interviewers (including Matt Denner), all scored the same candidate as their top pick. Offer made and accepted, start date of May 28, 2024.
- Manned stations (Massena, Potsdam, Ogdensburg) can configure comments on CAD so sensitive material just goes on the law card and doesn't spill onto the other cards.
- Meeting minutes: Motion made by Matt Denner to have Desirée Deon compose future meeting minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kevin Crosby. Motion passes with all in favor.
- Annual department report (emailed prior).

Other Items/Concerns /Discussions- All board members

- Raw methane transported in unmarked trucks around St. Lawrence County. The company has agreed to some training. New plant proposed: Canton-Morley Road and Route 310, 18 trucks per day would drive this route; big concern for St. Lawrence County.

Next meeting: June 20th, 2024

Adjourned at – 7:58 PM