

Bi-monthly meeting of the St. Lawrence County Fire Advisory Board

Thursday December 21, 2023

Meeting called to order at 6:00pm by Chairman Joe Finnegan

Members present: Mark Bradish, Mark Bomyea, Kevin Crosby, Bob Crowe, Larry Denesha (County Liaison), Matt Denner (Car 1), Vinny Ferry (Car 5), Joe Finnegan, Jeff Hammond (Car 4), Erick Johnson, John Lashomb, Rick Rusaw, Ken Stull, Larry Whitton & Steve Wilson

Members excused: Adrian Bush, Art Howie, Scott McRobbie, Chris Sherwin & Chris Velez

Motion by Erik Johnson & 2<sup>nd</sup> by Larry Whitton to approve the minutes from the October meeting.  
Motion passes with all in favor

Legislator Larry Denesha went over the renovations project at the Public Safety Complex. Noting that all contractors are local and that \$5,000,000 will come from ARPA moneys and \$2,200,000 will come from fund balance to pay for the upgrades.

Legislator Denesha went over the county budget noting that it is down 5.9% on the tax levy.

Legislator Denesha also brought up about a new grant the Governor is touting for new equipment and building repairs. The total is \$25,000,000 for strictly volunteer departments.

John Lashomb inquired if the money which was supposed to be used for the airboat was put to the radio upgrade as requested by the Fire Advisory Board. Legislator Denesha was not sure but would look into it.

Emergency Services Director Matt Denner

Fire, EMS & Police call report for October & November 2023 – See Attachment #1 & Attachment #2

Communications project

Noted that the change order to switch over to TDMA. Noting that departments need to know that just because they have a certain number of portables and mobiles does not mean that they will get the same number in the new system. That the county controls all radios that will be transmitting on the new system.

There will be more testing in February on the new system.

Mid-State should be installing the new antenna on the Whitehill tower before the end of December.

Ken Stull asked if county highway, City and village PD's & DPW's were in the county's radio system.

Matt said police are in the system but highway & DPW's are not.

Still working on the Cranberry Lake and Star lake tower specs with APA on tower heights, and with the NYPA who requested insurance paperwork & weight estimates on equipment that will be on the tower. Potsdam tower site is out to bid

Updated on the progress of obtaining the FCC licenses.

Updated on the new consoles that will be installed. They are currently in Syracuse and should be installed very soon.

Updated on the command unit. 4 multi band radios will be installed. Phones will be operational in January. And Matt showed the mockup of what the unit will look like once it has the decals in place.

Dispatch is still in Massena at this time.

Active shooter drills are continuing. With drills at Arconic, United Helpers & the County Court House

Matt went over the new paperwork from Fort Drum that was used recently in the Morristown active shooter drill and the changes that were made after that drill. Matt hopes to do at least one school per year with the active shooter.

MASS notification system resolution is being sent to the board of legislators for their approval. RAVE is the current company that has shown the county their system of mass notification. If approved the system is hope to be operational by April of 2024.

Departments need to get their NFIR's completed on all calls. If you do not have your NFIR's complete then you will not receive ANY grants for the state and federal government.

State Fire

George Massaroti - No report.

Training Center – Bob Kerr

No report

Training

Bob Crowe also reiterated that if the NFIR's are not in your department will not get grant money. Bob went over the training requests and asked if your department wants a training to get it in soon. The next meeting to schedule trainings is January 9, 2024. Bob stated that this year was a good year for requests with over 70 requests for training being sent in.

Bob also reminded people about the new training stipend being offered by NYS. BFO class is \$750.00, IFO class is \$1,250.00 & Fire Officer I class is \$1,000.00 for all firefighters taking the class for the first time and the class being completed on or after August 31, 2023. Fire Departments must have completed their NFIR's for the prior year to qualify and the department will have to fill out a department demographic form for the state.

It was brought up to again remind the department that the state and county are still pushing towards minimum standards for officers of all departments. It is not mandatory but it coming so departments should start getting officers to take these required classes.

Bob brought up about having District de-con teams for each district to get more fire fighters to take de-con class. NYS issues one de-con kit for each department at class.

#### Deputy Coordinators

Will be having district meetings in the first quarter of the year to go over what is to be expected with the new radio system. And to advise that if you are issues a radio that is transmitting on the county's new system that you will be required to have taken the county's radio class before the county will activate that radio.

There will be a chief's seminar in the near future for all department chiefs. Classes will include NFIR's, Scene preservation, on the job injuries/WC, How to use a radio, LMS, Training for Chiefs and when to call stand by mutual aid

#### F.I.T.

70 investigations so far this year.

2 new investigators.

The new software for helping with fire investigations is working great.

1 investigator resignation.

4 I-Pads have been given out to investigators that were bought with grant money.

#### SLC Hazmat Response Team

Propane flare training was done is September 2023

Water injection kit has been ordered.

Dry DECON suits are in

#### Dive/Rescue Team –

There is a water operations course scheduled for May 2024 in Colton

Surface ice class in Waddington in January 2024.

Matt updated the board on a New but used airboat. He is looking to get a P.O. to purchase this boat from a private individual. The fire advisory board reiterated that they would rather see the money for this got to the communications project over an airboat.

#### Technical Rescue –

Advanced class will be in the summer of 2024

#### Old business

Matt went over what it takes for a dispatcher to go through and find and dispatch a tanker task force when a department requests the tanker task force. They have to find it in a paper form in a book then find the proper area and then the proper departments to send,

#### New business

Matt went over and passed out paperwork to the members that were present that are up for reappoint and to see if they are still interested in staying on the board.. They are Darren Bullard, Erick Johnson, Scott McRobbie, Steve Parker, Rick Rusaw, Larry Whitton & Steve Wilson. There are two open positions on the board with one person from Cranberry Lake who is interested in joining the board.

A discussion held on the solar project in Canton with concerns after the fire at the solar plant in Jefferson County. Water supply concerns, what lessons have been learned from the Jefferson County fire and not to let anyone open burn under the solar panels.

A discussion was held on the Compressed Natural gas plants that are in and around the county. That the trucks are not placarded and the number of trucks on the road. Safety concerns for the plants and the trucking discussed.

A letter from the Hammond Fire Department on how they deem their members are active with a points system attached.

A letter of resignation from Art Howie was read and accepted.

Matt advised that Car 2, Jonathon Mitchell will be resigning effective 1/3/2024. Matt is trying to get the county to expedite the hiring process which could take up to 6-8 months.

Solar eclipse is coming on April 8, 2024 and a committee is being formed to go over the County's preparation and response to this event. The committee will be looking at bathroom facilities, parking and traffic flow as well as emergency response to the area in which the eclipse will be seen from the best. This is on the county's website also.

Rick Rusaw brought up that as of January 1, 2024 the Newton Falls Fire Department will combine with the Star Lake Fire Department.

Ken Stull brought up about hose testing safety after Watertown City Fire Department had two members get injured pretty seriously when they were out testing hose.

Respectfully submitted by

Kevin Crosby