

**Fire Chief Study Committee**  
**Minutes 12/22/21**  
**Virtual Zoom Meeting 10 am**

Present: April Stein, Elaine Puleo, Kristen Burgess, Walter Tibbetts, Jim Walton

Also present: Becky Torres, TA; Gary Rehorka,(guest), Rachel Schwab Rehorka

- Approved Minutes from 12/15/21 with changes.
- Review of Committee Charge with goal to complete our work and report to the Selectboard by end of January, beginning of February 2022.
- Discussed setting up a community forum for an upcoming evening. Committee will set a date for an evening forum and send out request to the community for questions prior to the meeting
- Review of FRCOG data relating to fire department salaries/department structure
  - Walter reported that his understanding in communicating with other towns is that other towns will be moving toward a model of having a FT chief.
  - Some towns have chief and deputy chief structure
  - Wendell and New Salem share a FT chief
  - Sunderland, despite larger population, has PT Chief-in this town the chief has a benefited job elsewhere.
  - Sunderland, South Deerfield and Whately are served by South County Ambulance,
- Shutesbury Department
  - Training is a major component of chief's job
  - FRCOG has not provided training to firefighters in the county
  - Most of the firefighters work outside of town which limits their availability
  - What will be the best structure for our town? Chief; Chief/Deputy; Chief/Deputy/Lieutenants; other ideas
  - Rachel Schwab Rehorka noted that we have been lucky to have a chief who lives in town
  - Becky asked what impact on the current force will be when Walter retires? Walter believes people will stay with the department as he stresses their commitment to the town.
  - Elaine noted that it will be a unique person who can be the chief/administrator/emergency mgt director/maintenance/training
  - Any parts of the job that could be separated out? Example: Maintenance?
  - Walter has increased the maintenance line item in FY '23 budget
  - Kristen noted we will need the right kind of leader for the town.
  - Discussed speaking with current fire fighter, separately, to get their input and thoughts
  - Becky and Walter are collecting the Fire Chief job descriptions from other towns for our review.
- April will draft a memo for the committee to review on where are we going as a committee as we move toward making recommendations to the Selectboard.
- Adjourned meeting at 11:15 am
- Next Meeting 12/29/21 at 10 am; Virtual Zoom Meeting