

1 **LYNDEBOROUGH BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

2 **MEETING MINUTES**

3 **January 7, 2019** (Monday)

4 *Final*

5
6 **I. Call to Order:**

7 Chairman Douglas called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

8
9 **II. Introduction of Members Present:**

10 Chairman Fred Douglas and Selectman Mark Chamberlain

11 Not Present: Selectman Richard McQuade

12 Town Administrator Russ Boland and Transcriber Kathleen Humphreys

13
14 **Public Present:** Fire Chief Brian Smith, Assistant Fire Chief Donnie Cole, Zeke Harkleroad,
15 Chairman of the Safety Complex & Other Options Committee John Pomer

16
17 **Media Present:** Jessie Salisbury

18
19 The Fire Department submitted a report called, *2018 Future Station's Needs &*
20 *Recommendations*. Zeke Harkleroad, a former fire chief and citizen, put together his own
21 analysis. The Safety Complex & Other Options Committee submitted a report in 2017 which
22 was printed in the 2018 Town Report.

23
24 Chairman Douglas said the purpose of tonight's meeting is to discuss the direction of the Fire
25 Department. The Board wanted to get a sense of people's feelings, where the town is going,
26 and how to get there.

27
28 Chairman Douglas expressed, "Through my own experience with a \$4.2 million police station in
29 Milford, if you are not all on the same page going into Town Meeting, it's not going to happen."
30 Chairman Douglas added, "There needs to be give and take and an understanding of other
31 people's feelings and analysis. Until you have a cohesive group of people, whether its
32 carpenters, masons, structural engineers, citizens and lay people that all come together and
33 make up this committee, this project will never see the light of day in my opinion".

34
35 T/A Boland wanted to discuss what will go in the Town Report on this matter. It was agreed to
36 reprint the Safety Complex & Other Options report from last year's Town Report accompanied
37 with a new cover letter. This material can be used for conversation points. The Town
38 Administrator's Report and the Selectmen's Report also include some information regarding this
39 topic.

40
41 John Pomer said the Safety Complex & Other Options Committee did not specify one specific
42 location for a future station or substation. The Committee wanted to look at different
43 possibilities and that was the intent of the presentation at Town Meeting in March 2018.

44
45 T/A Boland said the Board is looking for direction so they can move in incremental steps
46 towards that project. At Town Meeting, he would like to see what direction the citizenry wants.

47
48 "It's imperative this Board supports the concept or the direction this project will go; whether it's
49 renovations or a substation in the Center. Without the proper information and everyone being

50 on the same page, the Board can't take that step", said Chairman Douglas. He does not want
51 to go into Town Meeting, "All over the place." The goal is to agree on a plan.

52
53 John Pomer felt a structure in the Center was an idea the Committee agreed could help improve
54 fire coverage. The Fire Department would not have to rely on mutual aid as much and it could
55 help reduce some people's insurance bills. There is the option to keep the present station on
56 Rt. 31 as a Rescue Station since there is a higher need for the rescue vehicles along the Rt. 31
57 corridor.

58
59 Mr. Pomer talked about doing the work at each location in phases. For example, a substation in
60 the Center could be built tall enough to house the replacement vehicles with plans to add a
61 future addition. The Fire Station in the Village has been making do with limitations for a long
62 time. There is very little space and inadequate parking. The Committee felt the best option is to
63 have a structure in the Center. The Center lot abuts the Historical District therefore there are
64 additional historic requirements to consider.

65
66 Selectman Chamberlain and a college toured the Lyndeborough Fire Station. This Structural
67 Engineer's opinion is modifications would cost a lot of money because the structure does not
68 have reinforcement in the walls. His opinion is, "The Town could throw a million dollars at the
69 Station and that would fix only one or two of the problems". Beams would be required to
70 strengthen the structure in order to raise the building. Once work of that caliber starts, those
71 renovations would trigger requirements for the entire building to be brought up to current code
72 standards. There are a lot of code upgrades which would cost a lot of money.

73
74 The engineer said one option is build an addition that is not attached to the current Fire Station.
75 A parking lot on the same side of the road as the Fire Station is preferred. Both options require
76 land. It was noted, the owner of the abutting property is willing to discuss selling some land. He
77 plans to attend Town Meeting to participate in the discussion.

78
79 Chairman Douglas asked resident Zeke Harkleroad to discuss his analysis. Mr. Harkleroad
80 presented a document which demonstrates response time from a Fire Station in the Center and
81 in the Village. The data is from Google Maps. From the Village Station to the last structure in
82 North Lyndeborough (1815 2nd NH Turnpike), its 7.1 miles; travel time 15 minutes. From the
83 Center Station it would be 3.9 miles; travel time 9 minutes. Mr. Harkleroad noted there are
84 other factors geographically to consider that impact getting the scene and not just the travel time
85 provided by Google Maps.

86
87 Mr. Harkleroad explained that response time has many factors:
88 1. The 911 call.
89 2. 911 Dispatch transfer the call to the Lyndeborough Fire Department.
90 3. Depending on what Fire Department members are in town and what time of day/night it
91 is, determines what equipment can be dispatched.
92 4. The Frankestown Fire Station and New Boston Fire Station are about 4 miles to 4.5
93 miles out, therefore it would take those departments some time to arrive on-scene.

94
95 Chairman Douglas asked Fire Chief Brian Smith about his report. Chairman Douglas felt that
96 after reading it that it somewhat contradicts what Mr. Harkleroad's and Mr. Pomer's reports
97 indicate because response time is also based on where volunteers live and work. Chief Smith
98 responded, "Yes." Chief Smith said he looked back about 30-years and historically most of the
99 volunteers lived in the Village area.

100

101 Chairman Douglas asked Chief Smith, if they had a Substation in Lyndeborough Center, does
102 he think the response time for Firefighters who drive their own personal vehicle (POV) with
103 emergency lights to the Center is it quicker than to drive to the Village and take a fire truck to
104 the Center. Chief Smith replied it depends on who is responding. If there is a volunteer in the
105 Village they would be faster. The agreement is it's faster in a POV with emergency lights.
106

107 Mr. Harkleroad felt that historically a lot of volunteers lived on upper Mountain Road but times
108 have changed. He recalled many volunteers from Mountain Road to Wilton Road or Bracketts
109 Cross Road. He felt many volunteers lost interest because it took them too long to respond that
110 for the most part they didn't make the truck before it left the Station on a fire call. He felt some
111 sort of Station deserves to be in the Center.
112

113 The town property in the Center abuts the Historic District. It was discussed that any building
114 would have to adhere to certain standards, be out of sight as much as possible, and not detract
115 from the Historic District. Access to that lot was discussed and there are concerns from various
116 groups. Mr. Harkleroad felt that there would be a lot of transition to have a Fire Station in the
117 Center, but it can be worked out.
118

119 Chief Smith's concerns about a Station in the Center are:

120 -Is it a buildable lot?

121 -The property is down in a valley and getting the trucks out of that valley. He thinks access
122 could be a nightmare.

123 -Retaining volunteers and recruiting volunteers. It may or may not have an impact on
124 volunteers firefighter to have a Station in the Center.

125 -Staffing two stations could be very difficult.

126 -Staffing the trucks; it takes two Firefighters to roll out a truck. If one Firefighter responds to the
127 Center and one to the Village Station, they can't roll out a truck until a third Firefighter arrives at
128 either location.
129

130 Chief Smith felt they could do what the Town of Weare did and build a one bay station that
131 houses a tanker.
132

133 Chief Smith does not feel the insurance issue is as big of a concern as the Committee
134 portrayed. No resident is without homeowners insurance. It might cost that individual home a
135 bit more for their insurance premium, but they are not denied insurance coverage
136

137 Chief Smith felt there are safety concerns at the current Fire Station that need to be considered
138 now and not later. His concern is if the focus shifts to building in the Center, that the Forest
139 Road Fire Station would be neglected. It was discussed that the Town owns the building but not
140 the land. According to Mr. Harkleroad, the Town allocated \$21,000 between 1948 and 1970 to
141 construct the building. It was discussed that as long as that building was used for a Fire Station
142 the Town can continue to use the land. If the building use discontinues as a Fire Station, the
143 land would revert back to the Sherman Trust. Selectman Chamberlain mentioned to keep in
144 mind, if the land reverts back that, the Town may be responsible for removing the building which
145 could be a significant cost.
146

147 T/A Boland felt there are two major concerns:

148 1) Fair and equitable response to everyone who lives in Lyndeborough.

149 2) Firefighter safety. Safety includes response time, training opportunities, and the working
150 environment. He has concerns that the Firefighters park across the street from the Station.
151

152 Safety concerns were discussed such as volunteers get dressed behind the trucks when
153 responding to a call, the lack of an apron, and parking across the street.

154
155 T/A Boland explained that whatever the groups decide they want to do, hypothetically it could be
156 a combination of the Village and Center locations. It would be ideal to do the work in a series of
157 years. The site evaluation can happen this year and it was noted the Board has the authority to
158 allocate money for site evaluation. The architectural drawings can be done next year and site
159 work the following year. It could be 3-5 years out before a building is possible.

160
161 Assistant Fire Chief Donnie Cole encouraged talking to the abutting landowner and felt the
162 possibility of purchasing a little bit of land could make the difference between demolishing the
163 building and starting over or renovating it. Additional land could help with parking and the septic
164 system.

165
166 It was discussed that no matter what happens in the Center, as a possible Station or Substation,
167 there are serious issues with the current Fire Station on Forest Road.

168
169 Mr. Harkleroad felt there are three sections in town in terms of population that all represent
170 about a third of the town's population. He anticipates more future growth in the north side of
171 town.

- 172 1) North of the Center
- 173 2) The Greenfield side of the Rt. 31 corridor
- 174 3) The lower section of the Rt. 31

175
176 Chief Smith said that in terms of responding over the mountain they have an automatic second
177 alarm and many times mutual aid arrive on-scene before Lyndeborough does.

178
179 T/A Boland asked if the Fire Department could look at this in a dual fashion and take care of the
180 current Station at the same time be working on a Substation in the Center. Chief Smith said he
181 is not against a Substation but he does not see it in the next 10-years. He is willing to do a dual
182 attack on the problems. The next step is to determine a needs assessment, resolution and the
183 cost.

184
185 T/A Boland reported the energy audit on the Fire Station is near completion and it should not
186 cost the taxpayers any money.

187
188 Selectman Chamberlain recommended when planning for a new Fire Station it should be
189 planned to meet the needs of the Fire Department and the Community for at least 45-years out.
190 The Planning Board should be helping them out with their Master Plan and the Growth Plan.
191 Chief Smith has not had any communication with the Planning Board. Selectman Chamberlain
192 felt that there is more available land in the North section of town at this point.

193
194 John Pomer said that the Safety Complex & Other Options Committee was aware the Mountain
195 Road Bond was for 10-years and they use a 10-year plan as a marker, but planning and actions
196 on the future needs and any transition could start sooner. If the Fire Department stays in the
197 Village, they need more land. If they want taller trucks, a new building in the Center is a good
198 idea and that building can start as one or two bays with future expansion plans. Chief Smith
199 said it would be a mistake to get rid of fire trucks in the Village.

200
201 The need to purchase custom trucks that would fit in the current station was debated. Mr.
202 Harkleroad felt they could do better than buying custom trucks then putting them in a 70-year

203 old structure. He asked if neighboring town's trucks fit inside the Lyndeborough Fire Station
204 when they respond for mutual aid. Chief Smith felt that some do.

205
206 T/A Boland felt the problem is nation-wide and more areas are combining forces therefore a
207 station in the Center could be a bargaining chip for a central hub.

208
209 Chairman Douglas asked if the people present have enough information to write a report in a
210 week. He also reiterated that, "If it's not cohesive at Town Meeting that it will go down in
211 flames". Chairman Douglas asked if Chief Smith, John Pomer and Zeke Harkleroad can get
212 together and write a report within a week and provide options to the Board.

213
214 Evaluating the two sites needs to be a priority to determine if they are buildable sites. Chairman
215 Douglas asked Chief Smith if he had an idea how much land they would need at the current
216 station before they do core samples. How many bays do they envision? Tearing down and
217 rebuilding the station could be a possibility.

218
219 Chairman Douglas mentioned that at Town Meeting there will be a lot of discussion about the
220 fire department needs, location options and costs. He requested the individuals and
221 organizations here tonight be on the same page.

222
223 **Action Items:**

- 224 -Chief Smith will review his report before submitting it for the Town Report.
225 -The report John Pomer wrote last year for the Safety Complex & Other Options Committee will
226 be reprinted in the Town Report with an additional cover letter.

227
228 **Adjournment:**

229 **VOTE: Selectman Chamberlain made a motion, Chairman Douglas seconded to adjourn**
230 **at 8:20 p.m. Motion passed 3-0.**

231
232 Kathleen Humphreys, Transcriber

233
234 Chairman Fred Douglas

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238 Selectman Mark Chamberlain

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242 Selectman Richard McQuade

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