

TOWN BOARD WORKSHOP**SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 AT 6:30 P.M.**

The Farmington Town Board along with the Victor Town Board held a workshop with Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corp. on September 13, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Farmington Town Hall there were:

Present: Supervisor Peter Ingalsbe
Councilman Nate Bowerman
Councilman Mike Casale
Councilman Steven Holtz
Town Clerk Michelle Finley

Victor Town Board Supervisor Jack Marren
Councilman Drew Cusimano
Councilman Mike Guinan

Victor-Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corp. - Jim Hood- President, Chief Palmer, Dave Degear, and Suzanne McCraffery

Also Present in person: Ron Brand – Director of Planning and Development, **Ed Hemminger** – Planning Board Chairman, **Dan Delpriore** – Code Enforcement Officer, **Tim Hannan** – Conservation Board Member

Mr. Hood, President of the Victor Farmington Volunteer Ambulance Corp., looked back on 2022 and the goals that were set. He stated that their budget for 2022 was just over 2 million dollars, with each town contributing \$150,000.00 to their overall budget. Their primary goals for 2022 were focused on having manpower to answer calls so they were focused on benefits and compensation, merit-based wage increases that averaged 12%, added new 402k with 6% matching, and additional BLS (Basic Life Support Providers) wage increases in September. They have hired ten personnel (7EMT's and 3 Paramedics), and they have maintained a staff total, both part-time and full-time, at 40.

Mr. Hood stated that their call volume to the end of August is 1881 (1010 in Victor and 871 in Farmington), 100+ increase versus in 2021. He added that the response time is excellent. He added that new this year they partnered with Fitch & Associates to conduct a comprehensive assessment of their operation, they anticipate the study will be completed by year end or early next year. Their objectives are to see how they are performing against the national standards, to identify areas of excellence and target improvements, and most importantly to inform their growth strategy, staffing, and capital investment plans (what should they be doing over the next five years). He stated their goal is to be prepared to continue providing responsive, cost-effective, clinically sophisticated EMS to support the community's rapid growth.

Supervisor Ingalsbe stated that in at least the third year in a row that Farmington has added 100+ homes and they anticipate next year will be more because there will be an 88-unit apartment complex plus the regular single-family homes. Mr. Hood stated that Thompson Hospital is planning on opening a new primary care facility in Farmington, he stated that Thompson Hospital stated that they have seen growth of over 3,000 families in Farmington. Mr. Hood stated that they want to be ahead of the change, they don't want to be in the situation where they cannot provide the service, and a 10% growth rate could double their call volume.

Mr. Hood stated what the 2023 budget pressures are: significant economy -wide inflation, fuel costs, overtime, ongoing labor wage pressures both in and out of industry, Medicare and Medicaid rate increases are severely lagging, and call volume increasing faster than revenue generating transport. He stated more people are calling 911 but they are not getting more money.

Mr. Hood stated that they have a proposed budget of \$2,477,793 for 2023 and are requesting \$250,000.00 from each town. He added that 10% of budget is from each town and about 80% of the budget is made up from billing. He added that they need to be prepared for the growth they are seeing. He stated that last year they went to one full crew 5 days per week, and this they want to have two crews, 24 hours 7 days per week, and hire two additional full-time staff to improve call coverage at lower costs by reducing overtime pay. Mr. Hood stated that another goal for 2023 is to maintain response times, view towards increased presence in Farmington. He added that town funding is needed to support growth. Next steps: Town budget meetings in October – Victor will be October 4th and 18th, and Farmington will be September 19th. Mr. Hood added that town contracts should be signed in December to support VFA's business needs and to assure residents and businesses continued high quality EMS care in the community.

Supervisor Ingalsbe stated that he knows where they are coming from. Supervisor Marren asked Mr. Hood if they can assume overtime is trending over last year based on the call volume driving that, Mr. Hood replied yes. Supervisor Marren asked Mr. Hood if it's just going to be a band aid on the overtime by hiring two crews and going from five days to seven days or is it going to resolve the issue, Mr. Hood replied that going to seven days is less of a band-aid on the overtime and more of making sure they have call coverage. He added that what they are seeing now is that a lot of crews are taking back-to-back calls and they are having days where both crews are taking back-to-back calls, and there is a real risk that they are going to start to get that third call and they will not have two crews up. Mr. Hood stated that their mutual aid calls are also up, additional 130 calls this year.

Councilman Bowerman stated that County is changing their dispatching procedures where they are not going to tone an ambulance and see if they can get a response, with the more rural ambulances they would send the tones out and wait a couple of minutes to get a response, and they are no longer going to do that. He added that when people call 911 people expect fire, police and ambulance to show up.

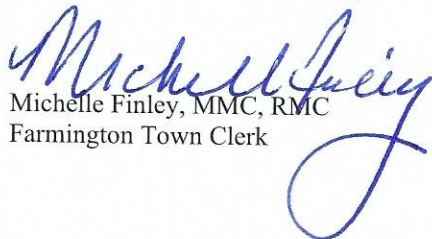
Mr. Cusimano asked to clarify that there are currently two crews working 24/7, over night Monday-Friday, do they have a second over night crew or is this daytime they are talking about. Chief Palmer replied that it is based off staffing, that 75% of the time they have the staffing to meet that need of five days per week. Mr. Cusimano stated that he didn't realize that there was a second crew 3-4 nights per week. Chief Palmer stated that is where the two additional full-timers would come in. Mr. Cusimano stated that the goal for 2023 is to make it to the seven days per week, Chief Palmer replied yes. Mr. Cusimano stated that he supports the additional cost for a second night crew seven days per week, even if it's just a security jacket because it only takes one additional call coming in one minute sooner. He added that the ambulance corp. is doing an excellent job with call coverage.

Mr. Cusimano asked what the long-term plan is as far as the Victor Fire House coverage, he felt that what he has seen it is working fantastically, but also see it is a mandated bridge to the gap for something in the future. He asked Mr. Hood if they have a comprehensive plan for that. Mr. Hood replied that they had not but that is why they contracted with Fitch & Associates so they can look out 5-10 years and tell them what the call volume looks like, where is the call volume going to be, and how should they be operating the business when it comes to staffing and such.

Supervisor Marren thanked the Town of Farmington for hosting the workshop. Mr. Hood thanked both boards for their time.

Supervisor Ingalsbe closed the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes taken and transcribed by


Michelle Finley, MMC, RMC
Farmington Town Clerk