



Select Board

21 State Line Road, West Stockbridge, Mass. 01266-0525

Tel. (413) 232-0300 x319

Fax. (413) 232-7195

E-mail: admin@weststockbridge-ma.gov

Select Board Meeting Minutes Joint Meeting with Richmond Selectmen March 15, 2022

Quorum present: Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Chair and Members Roger Kavanagh, Kathleen Keresey and Marie Ryan, Town Administrator.

Others in Attendance: Richmond Town Administrator Danielle Fillio, Richmond Selectmen; Neal Pilson, Roger Manzolini and Allan Hanson, EMT/Fire Department Member Austin White and Shared Fire Chief Steve Traver.

Eric called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and listed the West Stockbridge Select Board members present.

Neal Pilson called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM and listed the Richmond Selectmen in attendance, Roger and Neal. Richmond Selectmen Allan Hanson joined the meeting at 10:12 AM.

Danielle gave an overview of the purpose of the meeting, a shared ambulance professionally staffed with two EMTs full-time weekdays. She said there currently is an issue with ambulance service in all of Berkshire County. The start-up costs are one of the biggest issues, however, Richmond already has a fairly new ambulance and a place to house it. The only thing needed is to have a full-time staff. She then introduced Austin White, a Fire Fighter in Lee and Richmond and who has a long history of EMT service.

Austin said that one of the issues with ambulance services is that many are staffed by volunteers who have full time jobs at other places causing a long response time. The suggested response time Austin feels, typically is 8 minutes but locally it has been up to as much as an hour. He suggested that the two Towns join and create two full time staff EMTs to give basic service to the residents for a much quicker response time. The cost of housing and maintaining the ambulance vehicle is fully funded through the receipts which the ambulance receives when used. The only cost for the two Towns would be for the two full time staff for their salaries and all benefits. This cost in total would be \$132,000. He said that he and Danielle have applied for a grant that would cover this cost for the first 3 years and the Towns would have to guarantee to pay for and keep the staff for the following three years. The two

Towns may also re-apply for this grant. It might not be necessary for the Towns to cover the cost after the initial three years.

Neal asked Austin if he felt that he had two people that are able to fill these positions and Austin replied yes, he does. Austin and Shared Fire Chief Traver would supervise these employees. They will be housed in Richmond but could also work at the West Stockbridge Firehouse as well.

Austin informed the Boards that the grant application has made it to the third round which is a very good sign. He stated that we are the first to come up with the shared ambulance plan so that will also help us to be more attractive to get the grant.

Roger Kavanagh asked if the Town of Richmond still owes money for the 2020 Ambulance and Austin replied that the ambulance was paid for in full by the receipts, so no tax money was used to purchase it. Roger asked how many EMTs are in West Stockbridge and Chief Traver told him one but that there are two currently taking classes.

Eric said this is a great opportunity for our two Towns and fully supports this. Kathleen agreed and stated that we need to modernize and increase our standards. Roger Kavanagh also agreed with Kathleen.

Danielle told the Boards that Richmond would be the lead Town and bill West Stockbridge for the costs of the salaries and benefits of the staff. She also said that she will use some of the money in the receipts account so that each Town would only have to pay \$45,000. This is will be the amount needed to be placed in the warrant for Town Meeting in the budget to cover the costs for this coming year in case we do not receive the grant.

The Boards asked Austin what the difference in call volumes is between the two Towns, and he said that is close to a 50/50 split. The populations are also very similar. The Boards agree that splitting the cost was fair. Danielle explained that the ambulance could receive extra money to become mutual aid for other nearby towns.

Austin stated that recently the ambulance had its state inspection where they received 100% compliance and the inspector suggested that in the future the ambulance may want to increase their status to an advanced support life level. This is something Austin feels would be a good option in the coming years to work on.

Neal discussed the fact that there has been talk in the county to form a county wide ambulance service. He asked Austin if we got this grant and then wanted to join the county program what would happen with the grant money. Austin said that the grant money is transferrable, so if we joined a county service we could put our grant money into that pot.

The next steps will be for Danielle to engage Richmond Town Counsel to create an agreement between the two Towns. The two Towns will need to add this money item to the Town Meeting Warrant and get it approved.

There were no public comments.

Eric stated that the West Stockbridge Select Board will invite our Finance Committee to the next Select Board agenda to seek their approval in adding this as an item on the Town Meeting Warrant, and to have another public conversation about this plan.

Austin thanked the Boards for listening to his proposal. Both Boards thanked Austin for his hard work and research on getting this proposal together.

Neal made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Roger Manzolini.

Roll Call vote:

Allan	Yes
Roger	Yes
Neal	Yes

Eric made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Roger Kavanagh.

Roll call vote;

Roger	Yes
Kathleen	Yes
Eric	Yes

Meeting adjourned at 11:11 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie U. Ryan

Town Administrator