

Date: December 14, 2022
To: Board of Selectmen
From: Lou Brodeur
Subject: Request from both Departments for Paid Firemen

The Board of Fire Commissioners has put in an ARPA request to fund 3 paid firemen (2) at Mortlake and (1) in East Brooklyn without a complete or organized plan.

3 years ago, the Board of Selectmen discussed putting together a plan that would convert the paid ambulance crew at the Mortlake station into both ambulance responders and also as paid firemen to protect the town. This plan never materialized because the only way the plan would work would be that the paid people would have to be town employees and some of the Mortlake members couldn't accept this plan. The whole thing was a control issue.

Some of the surrounding towns that have combination crews are town employees and everything seems to work very efficiently. The town of Brooklyn is not large enough to have 5 paid people in our public safety department.

To gain control of this issue before things get out of hand, requires that the Board of Selectmen establish a committee to study this future endeavor. I would suggest a committee of the 3 selectmen, 2 fire chiefs and a couple of town people to get this moving along in the right direction. Maybe include our HR person. I'm not in favor of spending \$30-40k to have some outside firm telling us what needs to happen. The last time we hired a firm, the first thing they did was to interview the fire departments to see what they wanted to happen. Then they suggested that the town close the EBFD and the WWFD stations, build a new station on Allen Hill and a new station at Stetson 4 corners. You can see how far that report went and that was only \$20K plus.

The need to have some sort of paid firemen in town is not going away anytime soon and it is at a point that we need to plan something in the very near future. Maybe not at budget time but not too far into the distant future. It bothers me to see the ambulance crew some days sit for 12 hours and do nothing when these people could be accomplishing many tasks including responding to fire calls.

We need a plan that's good for the fire departments, good for the towns people and does not cost us a small fortune. The revenue from the ambulance almost covers the cost of the two ambulance members at Mortlake and that amount wouldn't increase much more if they were also firemen. The main cost would be if they were town employees, they would be eligible for benefits

The present ambulance members work 12 hours a day (6am-6pm) seven days a week and we could hire a 3rd person to work 40 hours/week to act as a lead man or supervisor.

Let's put this on the agenda for the 12/29/22 meeting and discuss how to proceed.

Thanks,

Lou