

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING  
OCTOBER 23, 2014  
7:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Kevin Lyden, Robert Ross, Edward Chmielewski, Elbert Burr, Lewis Buckley

**CALL TO ORDER:** K. Lyden called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

K. Lyden thanked the volunteers for public safety in Salem.

He stated the survey was not to be threatening; it should be used to help the Town of Salem for:

1. Safety for our volunteers and paid staff.
2. Enhanced safety for our community.
3. Savings in future purchasing of equipment and administration.

The survey should be used to help with the ten year capital plan for a community this size.

**A.) Presentation of Public Safety Study**

A presentation was given by Don Jutton and Ed Walker of Municipal Resources Inc. for the Public Safety Study. (See attached presented study)

Topics were: Scope of the Study, Demographics, Primary Service Area, Priority Issues, Observations, Wrap-up and recommendation and practices that are best for the Town.

**B.) Question and Answer**

Questions and statements were made from the following:

Kevin Lyden stated the report (which can be found on SalemCT.gov) does not ask for a fire station to be shut down, it is asking for consolidation of the two departments into one administration within three years. No decisions will be made tonight; the Board of Selectmen will discuss at a future date and will decide to start to work on some of these recommendations.

Robert Green 411 Forsyth Road asked about the progression of the study and if the BOS were kept apprised of the study.

Horace Lindo felt the study was insulting to the Gardner Lake Fire Company and consolidation of the two fire departments under a hostile environment.

George Jackson 62 Hilltop Trail stated he has used both ambulance and fire service. He thought the Town would benefit if the fire departments were better organized and the current environment seems unhealthy. Residents recognize why it is the way it is and why there is separation in Town. Perhaps a single set of procedures and non-duplication would be best for the Town. He did not agree with all of the survey.

Katrina Zickwolf asked about having one municipal chief and the extra money it would take to have the position in Town.

Georgia Pech 460 Darling Road asked how the 75%/25% split for the Town with housing was decided.

John Cunningham stated the Town is not divided; the first fire department to the scene becomes incident command. At least 20 years ago maps of the town and response times for the two departments were reviewed.

Kevin Lyden stated the majority of housing subdivisions and businesses are on the Salem Volunteer side of Town. The growth for the Town has been on this side over the past 25 years.

Gene Maiorano 799 West Road presented a letter dated 1981 from Hugh Teel stating the response division in Town.

Don Bourdeau stated the fire service has changed. Demographics result in incident command. In his opinion, people involved need to sit down and meet, some things can be implemented tomorrow but it needs to all be put together.

Robert Green stated concerning the chiefs; he stated someone will always step up and take charge.

Kevin Lyden stated with one working chief, the Town would receive better services. The experts that did the survey that do not live in Salem. The ages of the volunteers are always a concern as the volunteers get older.

Diba Kahn-Bureau 40 Hilltop Trail asked what the two fire chiefs thought of the survey.

Gene Maiorano 799 West Road (Chief of Salem Volunteer) agreed some changes are needed. The departments should work together and train together as needed. They should have common goals. Contrary to rumors, he stated he does not want to be "chief" of both departments. Between the two departments, it is a work in progress and they need to proceed.

Jim Savalle (Chief of Gardner Lake Fire Station) stated each firehouse has the most compassionate group of volunteers. There is tension sometimes between the departments; the welfare of the community is always in mind. He stated 75 to 80% of the calls are for medical and he thinks the mutual aid response is outstanding. He felt the survey was incomplete and should start over.

T.J. Butcher 248 Norwich Road stated for the large part the residents seem happy with the emergency services. Most of what gets done is right, but we need to do better.

Art Winakor stated he is a member of Oakdale Firehouse due to the proximity to his house. He thinks the survey was not needed and the selectmen brought in the experts where they are not needed.

Lewis Buckley 15 Corrina Lane stated it seems that there is some degree of the department's ability to work together. There would be benefits if there was a unified administration. He does not think residents should be too excited about the survey, it is a step in the right direction.

Pam Monroe asked if there is any concern about the low level of resident survey responses and is that typical.

Don Jutton responded that the amount of resident responses was typical.

Vern Smith asked what would be the expense to the town.

Don Jutton stated the Town has 20 to 25% more equipment than it needs. Shared training is important for the departments. There would be a better quality of service and very efficient capital savings.

Brian Ennis asked about the liability of medical response time.

Don Jutton stated when two trucks (one from each department) responds to a call, there is liability involved and an increased risk of accidents. A risk assessment should be done; the survey is an informed view and the Board of Selectmen and volunteers should make the decisions.

Hernan Salas 99 Sullivan Road wanted to know what will happen to the two departments.

Don Jutton stated a consolidation of administration is needed; there is more expense by running two departments. There is no right or wrong; it is what is best for the Town.

Susan Spang stated she appreciated the Town doing the survey and the report. She asked if this was a common response from volunteers and residents. Change is hard and have other towns go back to the way it was.

Don Jutton stated yes it was a common response; 50% of the towns who have a survey done do something of what the survey recommends.

Charles Weston 47 Meadow Lane stated the survey should be looked as a tool for the Town. Change is coming down the road and where does the Town stand. It may be that there will be no volunteers and the Town will have career firemen/EMT's. The departments do things well but it is going through growing pains. The Town should have open minds and think ahead as to where it wants to be in 10 to 15 years.

Robert Ross made a motion to adjourn; motion was withdrawn.

Joe Dannaio stated that from the report each department is doing okay and it could be better. He asked about the type of survey that was done for the Town. He mentioned other survey's that were done for other towns.

Don Jutton stated the Town paid for a \$25,000.00 survey. Some of the surveys Mr. Dannaio referenced were much more expensive and actually paid for a team member to stay at a firehouse for six months. The Town is not in crisis, this is for the small community to look down the road as to where it wants for its services.

Edward Chmielewski stated he feels the glass is half full and the survey was a \$25,000.00 draft. Not all of the Selectman were invited to the meeting that was held last week.

Kevin Lyden stated the survey had been on Town website and available since last week. The process has been ongoing for at least a year, before Mr. Chmielewski was voted on the Board of Selectmen. Both Selectman Lyden and acting Selectman Ross have been involved with the study.

### **Adjournment**

**M/C/S (Ross/Buckley) to adjourn at 8:54 P.M.**

**Vote: Approved Unanimous**

**Respectfully Submitted**

**Diane Weston**

**Recording Secretary**