

Emergency Services Meeting
West Dover Firehouse
April 1, 2015

Present: Richard Werner, Jeannette Eckert, Heidi Taylor, Andy McLean, Bob Holland, Dave Meeker, Dave Moulton, Bob Rubin, Randy Johnson, Victoria Capitani, Michelle Mann

The meeting was called to order at 11:30am by Rich Werner to provide an overview of current emergency services and to foster a discussion on how to improve/expand those services

Rich Werner—Fire Chief:

- Several Act 250 permits coming in lately—different situations than what we are used to
- Mount Snow & Hermitage Club are looking into creating larger buildings
- Need a different type of protection than we have been dealing with
- This winter was a lot busier; numbers up on visitors
- Fire calls every other day in Dec, Jan & Feb
 - Had a tough time getting people to show up to calls
- Stormy weather put a burden on all town staff

- Delivery of emergency services in town
- Ridge trail project—Andy McLean has been working on to include back country skiing/hiking
- Mt Snow lost skiers—a couple times this winter—created issues in finding them
- New trails will bring people in but may be hard to locate them if needed—will not allow motorized vehicles—hard to put 4 wheeler out there

- More airport activity—more charter flights coming in
- Trying not to stop any development but it is getting harder to manage
- Propose creating incentive programs for volunteers
 - Need to encourage participation
- All town depts. worked well together on the BMW commercial—Hwy, EDFD, PD
- Most calls tend to come when all depts. are facing a busy day whether its fire, storm or accident related
- Christmas Day –5 fire calls
- Getting calls that aren't really emergencies?
- How to encourage people to use walk in clinics

Gathering ideas/concerns from the group:

Heidi Taylor—Deerfield Valley Rescue:

- Concerns over having enough people to cover shifts
- Mutual Aid has to come from Bennington or Brattleboro
- Focus on recruitment and retention of EMS
- Stratton runs a part time ambulance service—6am to 6pm during winter months
 - Physicians at their clinic there
- Trends of busyness—9 to 3 certain days, but it varies; can run reports and get more specific information
- Ideal situation—took over Whitingham & Halifax and now have an ambulance down in Jacksonville

- Would love to have the same scenario here in Dover
- 96 calls last month—over 800 calls last year
 - Typically a little over 100 calls a year to Mt Snow
 - Fewer to Haystack
- Huge change when the snowmaking improved at Mt Snow
- If health center moves to high school—envision less services, may lose x-ray dept.
- Would be ideal to have a medical facility in the Dover area, especially in emergency situations
- Could really use someone to develop the recruiting ideas and put them on various websites—not necessarily someone who has rescue experience
- Regarding trail access--Somerset has barriers that can be removed to get vehicles through
- Would benefit to utilize Mt Snow & Haystack trained personnel to aid DVRescue

Dave Moulton—Mt Snow:

- Mt Snow reached out to its volunteer ski patrol members
- Certainly on weekends and holidays during the day, there are trained folks at the mountain
- Several serve on ambulance services and EMTs in their own communities
- They get to ski as a benefit but it is a well-equipped group
- Will try to set up something more formal with them
- Protocols need to be in place—certified licenses to treat in VT
- Doctor’s office no longer open midweek
- Stratton model is different—use volunteer “on-call” doctors & families that come up for a week
 - Mt Snow looking into Stratton’s model for urgent care—if implemented would be a branch off of Stratton
 - Engages Harvard Medical School students to do clinical’s there & then they come back
- Offer to pay for time spent on the job—so it is not a burden to the town
- People have busy lives—not always willing to put more time in

Bob Rubin—Hermitage Club:

- Hermitage Club has been having monthly meetings to update/review its plans
- Happy to work with Mt Snow on any of these issues

Andy McLean—Town Clerk:

- Ridge Trail project
- Knows 4 or 5 folks who are willing to help out with back country rescue
- Trail—widen it to accommodate 4 wheeler/rescue equipment?
- Will broach the subject with the Forest service—there are some sensitive wildlife areas
- Engineers will come out this spring—will push for the emergency aspects
- Most of the trails are wide enough but the steep stuff are old logging roads—this is where the Forest service would have issues
- Trails will be marked—there are systems that will allow the ability to track people on these trails

Bob Holland—Road Commissioner

- Always work well with Fire and Police
- Hwy crew is interested in helping—as long as they continue to be paid their regular wage-- just need the training
- Can be an asset since they are on the road and may be the first witness to an accident

WD Fire Dept. needs:

- Ideal to have 20-25 people on a regular basis
- Currently have a dozen that show up regularly

Deerfield Valley Rescue needs:

- Had informational hand-outs at the Town Meetings for Dover, Wilmington, Whitingham
- Had a few responses
- 16 active at DVR—would like another 10 fully trained people

Dave Meeker—Mt Snow:

- Electronic distribution of a professionally done flyer—make it attractive to people—can have Mt Snow design it, just need the pertinent details
- Social Media blasts; most inexpensive way to get the word out
- Focus on community involvement—meeting new people—helping people in your own community
- Will come back at next meeting with a presentation of ideas

Michelle Mann—Police Office Manager:

- Would be good to include in flyer that volunteers don't have to live in Dover or Wilmington, perhaps just work there
- Rotary Club has a huge turnout—how do they get members?
- Bring back Ladies Aid type volunteers to serve coffee, food during an emergency—older folks could do this
- Would be nice to have a more extensive emergency room availability in the valley—this would cut down on ambulance transports

Victoria Capitani—Select Board Vice Chair:

- There are a lot of people that don't want to commit to volunteering; apathy exists
- Consider creating a good neighbor program to recognize the people who do volunteer their time
- Valley News would be more than willing to do employee spotlights
- Whitingham ambulance did spotlights a few years ago and people really liked those
- Would run at no charge-community service; sponsorships

Randy Johnson—Police Chief:

- Police officers—some are already trained in emergency services—working 10 hour shifts covering roughly 20 hours a day
- Consider training in false alarms—so FD doesn't always need to come out

Moving forward:

- Average of volunteers in a community is 10%
- Younger people aren't volunteering as much as in earlier years
- Young people are leaving the area to look for opportunities
- Economy plays a big part; a lot of manufacturing jobs are gone in VT
- Years ago, did not encourage people to join multiple depts.
 - Thinking of encouraging this again—forming a rescue squad
 - Some calls only 1 person showed up
- Winhall Fire Dept.—invite chief down to discuss their situation
- Marketing can help
- Think about what would be the one thing you would like to see for your Dept. in emergency situations?

- What are the situations that you run into?
- Flood—what happens if we have another—happy with Dover’s response and working on making it better
- Improved radio situation; had training sessions
- Dover area starting to develop larger buildings—higher number of floors per building
 - Will have more hydrants available but doesn’t help if no one shows up to the call
- Group to meet once a month on Wednesdays

For next meeting:

- Sample employee/ volunteer spotlight from DVNews
- Marketing presentation from Mt Snow
- Winhall Fire Chief visit

Next meeting on Wednesday, May 6th at 11:30 am

Respectfully submitted by Jeannette Eckert, Recording Secretary

Minutes are posted on the Dover, Vermont website: www.doververmont.com