

**MINUTES
WORKSHOP
DOVER CITY COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APRIL 2, 2003
6:00 PM**

Mayor Nossiff opened the Workshop at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Nossiff, Mayor Pro Tem Dunnington, Councilor Christenbury, Councilor Hindle, Councilor Keays, Councilor Tweedie and Councilor Whitmore. Also Present: City Manager Paul Beecher, Fire Chief Perry Plummer and Asst. Chief Ron Clymer.

Councilors Absent: Mayberry and Quigley.

**1. DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEWS
A. FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Plummer presented a power-point presentation (See 04/02/03 meeting folder). He explained the Organizational chart of the personnel and their responsibilities. The staffing levels are down from 13 per shift in 1979 to 10 per shift at present. There are 4 shifts of 10 working an average 42 hours per week. In comparison to other similar cities in New Hampshire, Dover is the lowest in staffing levels with 45 uniformed fire personnel compared to the highest of 66 in Salem. All personnel are cross-trained so that whenever there is anyone out, the vacancy is covered by the day shift operations workers. He explained that there is very little down-time for the personnel as they are either training or maintaining the equipment and facilities. Plummer stated he expects perfection through practice and training.

Next, he explained the various types of calls from fires and medical emergencies to water evacuations and lockouts, both motor vehicle and residential. The water evacuation is not just water in basements, but also includes sprinkler systems in businesses that may burst during cold weather. The lockouts are a service provided when there are no emergencies, with many of the residential lockouts being elderly residents.

Christenbury asked how many of these occur at the Dover Housing Authority.

Plummer stated that at those buildings there is a "Knox" box at each location with a key that unlocks the doors that the fire department personnel can access and let the people into the residence.

He explained that the category of Service Calls consists of all types of public assistance calls and related a story about a muskrat being caught in a fence just today.

The Department is planning on utilizing the same software as the Police Department to be able to track their data more specifically which will aid in grant applications, accreditation etc.

Whitmore asked about mutual aid agreements.

Plummer stated that we do have mutual aid agreements and will touch on that issue shortly.

He continued by discussing the increasing instances of simultaneous emergency calls with 2 calls at the same time 43 times per months and 3 or more calls at the same time 11 times per month. He also explained the effect of only 10 per shift during a fire when ideally 18 are needed to achieve the safest possible circumstances.

Next, the Para-medicine Division was outlined. The citizens of Dover are afforded the highest level of pre-hospital care available with many emergency room services being able to be delivered in the ambulance that result in the highest quality care.

Plummer explained that this high-quality service is a direct result of the personnel working together with the administration to make this a success with the guys going to school on their own time for this specific training.

He then discussed Paramedic intercepts which are provided when the pre-hospital care necessary in certain circumstances can better be provided by Dover, such as in a recent near-drowning incident in Northwood.

Other areas Chief Plummer reviewed were response times, Public Education and the Fire Safety Festival.

Dunnington referred to the slide regarding Amount Billed and Amount Collected with 100,000 not collected stating that this is a substantial amount of money and asked if this is expected to get better with the new stream-lined billing procedure.

Plummer stated that the new billing procedure gets the bill out sooner and in theory that means that it will get paid quicker. However, there are those people who cannot or will not pay regardless. He feels that the 70-75% collection rate is average and explained that they are no longer using a collection agency because they were too expensive, so the legal division does the follow-up with these situations. He explained that the paramedics are not concerned with whether or not someone can pay or not when they respond and he feels that this is the way it should be.

(Mayor Nossiff left the meeting at 7:05 PM)

Dunnington then asked about the non-emergency calls and who goes and how do they get there?

Plummer stated that for vehicle lockouts it is usually the ambulance crew who go out and that the whole crew goes so that if there is a call, they are already all together and can respond immediately. The ladder truck responds to residential lockouts because if they need to go through a window, they can access it. He explained that it doesn't cost anything to do the lockouts and the police department no longer does this.

Dunnington stated that there is wear and tear on the vehicles as well as gas.

Plummer stated that usually the vehicle is already out on the road when they respond.

Christenbury feels that it is not only the wear and tear that is negative, but also the public perception. There are companies that provide this service and he doesn't feel that the city should be doing this even if they started billing for it. He then stated that he also has the same questions regarding mutual aid as Councilor Whitmore.

Plummer distributed a handout with these figures (See 04/02/03 meeting folder)

Keays referred to the slide regarding Trim the Fleet asking what year is this vehicle.

Plummer stated that it is a 1974 and was redone in the early 1990's. He explained that the vehicle is in good shape, but is not utilized enough by the department to justify the upkeep and training. He currently has this vehicle and the Air Boat advertised for sale and will only sell them for a good price.

Keays stated that he doesn't want to see this vehicle sitting behind the public works building rotting away. He then addressed the air boat, stating that when they purchased it for he thinks around \$12,000, it was something they really needed to have, so why are they getting rid of that too?

Plummer explained that in order to meet the City Manager's direction to make cuts in the budget, one of the things they looked at was the fleet. A watercraft committee was formed to look at the effectiveness of the air boat and it was decided that due to the cost of training and the slow response capability, this was not a necessary item. In actuality they could have Newington meet them at Hilton Park and respond quicker than trying get the boat in the water. They could also join forces with the Police Department who also have a watercraft.

He stated that he has been here for 17 years and was involved in the decision to get the boat, but as a new department head with the directive to cut costs, this is one of his recommendations.

Christenbury feels that he should be commended for being willing to get rid of stuff and not trying to hold on to something that's not working.

2. OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Pro Tem Dunnington asked if there was any other business.
There was none.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Tweedie moved to adjourn, seconded and passed unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Valerie A. French
Deputy City Clerk