

Town of Otis
Selectboard
EMS Working Group
Meeting Minutes
Town Hall Conference Room
1 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253
Thursday, October 03, 2024, at 6:30 PM

[This meeting will be held in person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend.](#)

Attendance: Larry Southard, Terry Gould, Brandi Page, Chris Bouchard, Jeff Blanchard, Fred Freeman, B.J. O'Brien, Rick Phair, Brittany Phair, Sandy Pinkham, Shawn Tryon, Chris Tryon & Roger MacDonald.

Call to Order: 6:30 PM

Discussion: The meeting started with introductions. Jeff Blanchard and Fred Freeman are joining us as consultants. Both are from Hanover and are assisting with their years of expertise in Fire/Ems operations. The Otis Rescue Squad members have been coming to the Select Board meetings for a few years on and off communicating the shortage of staff and the resulting struggle to continue operating. Rick stated that at the last ORS Board meeting they voted to eliminate the Executive Board. The remaining Advisory Board is in favor of exploring the EMS service coming under the Town. Jeff outlined how Hanover had struggled with this same situation years prior and has successfully built a shared model within the structure of the Fire Department. Bringing the operation under the Town will allow us to offer more attractive shifts, better benefits and retirement. For several years ORS has indicated they needed additional funds to pay better wages and attract incoming EMT's. The Select Board has had to weigh simply levying additional funds for the Rescue Squad or transitioning the service under the Town to then be managing all the financial decisions. Ambulance revenue would be handled directly by the Town and would offset the expenditures. The group discussed a target date of July 01, 2025 to make the transition. Next steps were outlined including; transferring the licensure, transferring the supplies and equipment to the Town and establishing the appropriate budget for FY26. The Town has to forecast the impact to liability and benefit budgets as well. Both entities need to consult with counsel. ORS will need to refer to their articles of incorporation for guidance. Once established we would need to update affiliation agreements with neighboring hospitals and a medical control doctor. What many communities have been successful doing is creating an integrated response and hiring cross trained Fire/EMS staff. One component that is being looked at by a larger discussion group in South County is education and training. They are exploring how to realize more opportunities in Berkshire County. Next meeting date was set for November 7th.

Adjournment: 8:26 PM