

SELECT BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES

March 8, 2017

Meeting convened at 6:02 p.m.

RE: Public Hearing on the East Andover and Andover Fire Precincts Consolidation

PRESENT: Marj Roy, Vicky Mishcon, Jim Delaney, Dave Blinn

Fire and Emergency Services Personnel Present: Chief Rene Lefebvre, Glenn Haley, Fred Lance, John Kinney, Scott Kidder, Greg Stetson, Andy Guptill

Public Present: Ed Becker, Les Fenton, Becky Dobrietz, Bob Norander, Chuck Keyser, and Peter Maynard. Road Agent, John Thompson, arrived at 6:35 p.m.

Mishcon opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of this hearing was to gather information, reasoning and for public feedback.

Reminder of important dates: EAFD – Precinct meeting to vote is on March 21, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the East Andover Fire Department Building and the AFD – Precinct meeting to vote is on March 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Department next to Town Hall.

East Andover Fire Precinct Warrant Article #4 States:

To see if the voters of the precinct, contingent upon approval of a reciprocal warrant article in Andover Fire District #2 and approval of the Select Board, vote to consolidate the Andover and East Andover Fire Districts, including dissolving the East Andover Fire Precinct, transferring all assets, and setting boundaries of the Andover Fire District to include the entire Town of Andover, New Hampshire. This shall be effective January 1, 2018 (2/3 majority vote required)

Chief Lefebvre explained that the process of the consolidation started with a study committee. In 2010 the committee recommended consolidation. Among the reasons for consolidation were a reduction of equipment and cost, improved and efficient training, having a unified command and a single cohesive team structure. The precincts have been operating during the last several years as one department. When the alarm goes off, both precincts respond as one district. Now, at this final stage, legally both precincts need to be dissolved and the boundaries redrawn to incorporate the entire town boundaries. The vote is the final step in the process. If this article passes, the fire precincts will become one district. It will take a 2/3 of the registered voters present at the meeting from the EAFD to pass. AFD precinct voters will vote the next day, but it is not necessary. They want both precincts to have the opportunity to decide. Once complete, it will then go to the Select Board.

Having two separate precincts, makes it very cumbersome for many things, including having two budgets with two separate audits, two sets of state reports (seven for each precinct per year). Currently, when equipment is purchased or training is scheduled, there has to be a determination of where the money comes out of, either AEFD or AFD.

Consolidating the precincts will make everything from buying equipment to alleviating two separate sets of State reports and audits. Additionally, it will remove the tax inequity between East Andover and Andover districts. It will also open up the opportunity for Federal Grants and better representation by Commissioners.

There were some concerns about the taxes going up if this consolidation passes. Historically, there has always been a tax inequity between Andover and East Andover. Based on the 2017 budget numbers, for a home valued at \$200,00, East Andover resident's taxes will increase \$.18 per thousand which is about \$34.00 yearly. On the Andover side, the taxes will decrease about \$28.00.

The Andover Fire Commissioners are recommending five (5) commissioners be appointed. In the future, the Select Board might change the number and feel that only three (3) commissioners are adequate.

There was a concern that there will be no fire protection on the east side of town without the EAFD precinct building. However, there will be no changes in the buildings. Both buildings will remain the same and they will operate out of both as always.

After the presentation and discussion, the Select Board members were all in agreement and in favor of the consolidation.

Public Hearing closed at 6:37 p.m.