

**HOLLISTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2012**

The Board convened in the Training Room at the Central Fire Station at 9:00 p.m. Present from the Board of Selectmen were Vice-Chairman Jay Leary and Clerk Kevin Conley. Chairman Jay Marsden was absent. Also present were Fire Chief Michael Cassidy, Deputy Fire Chief Arthur Moore, Town Administrator Paul Le Beau and approximately forty-three firefighters.

Mr. Conley explained that Mr. Marsden was out of town and sends his regards. Mr. Conley said he has great respect for what the firefighters do.

Mr. Leary said that the Board was interested in hearing the firefighters concerns and explained that since minutes are being kept people should identify themselves when they speak.

Mark Heavner asked for the Selectmen's response to the proposal from the Chief. Mr. Leary said this meeting is part of the Board's process of developing a response. Mr. Conley said the Chief has been a strong advocate; he has your back. Mr. Heavner said they have been waiting since last spring and agreed to wait until the fall town meeting but they don't want to wait longer than that as this has been lingering for a long time. Mr. Leary said the Board would respond, probably by the town meeting, after they look at pay options, talk to the Finance Committee and take into account the Town's OPEB liability. Mr. Heavner said their compensation is underfunded, they deserve a raise, they've been left out for too long, the schools get what they want and now we are hearing about future liabilities. They do a better job than many departments for a fraction of the cost. Mr. Conley said he was impressed by the 10:1 ratio of mutual aid provided to mutual aid received; that speaks volumes. Sean Irr said most of the firefighters go to the academy on their own time. Mr. Conley said there should be better PR for the department. Deputy Arthur Moore said that Ashland's budget is three times the size of Holliston's yet they had to call in five towns to help them with a house fire. Alan Elliot said full time departments automatically call in mutual aid for structure fires. Holliston has an excellent response time from a dedicated group with strong camaraderie and fellowship. The compensation has become a matter of principle. Mr. Conley said they would push for an answer and they are willing to negotiate. John Gagnon said they had a promise four years ago that hasn't been kept. They have a great team and they need to keep up with the compensation. Mark Dellicker said the proposal is a realistic number. Mr. Leary said the number proposed doesn't work. Mr. Dellicker said he wanted the Selectmen to understand the amount of time involved in being a firefighter. Adam Slicer said they are proposing a realistic number, less than a much higher amount they discussed. Mr. Dellicker said they drop everything at work to respond to a call at a small fraction of what they normally earn. The calls take a toll. Fred Carnes asked about the process for making a decision. Mr. Conley said they are researching and suggested a negotiation session with some of the firefighters. Chief Cassidy said that would undermine the Chief's responsibility. Mr. Conley apologized. Justin Brown asked what the problem is with the amount requested. Mr. Leary said it is too much and is not sustainable. He wants to see comparisons from other departments. Angela Lawless said the firefighters painted the station on their own time. She said the comparison should be to fire departments, not just call departments. Chief Cassidy noted that thirty-four firefighters are certified at Firefighter I/II;

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all firefighters are trained to the standards of those certifications. Mr. Heavner said the comparison should include response time, number of personnel responding and performance. Ken Fisher questioned the need to compare to other towns. Mr. Brown said the Selectmen seem to be searching for a call fire department that is less expensive and are not seeing the value provided by this department. Mr. Leary said there was an opportunity to get the money in an override a few years ago but the department declined. Mr. Dellicker said it is insulting to keep hearing about the override. Mr. Leary asked if they would consider an override now. Mr. Dellicker said they would consider an override for \$240,000. Mr. Heavner said no, he doesn't want to be associated with an override. Maybe, in hindsight, they should have done the override the last time. Mr. Conley said the department is a great value and they will work with the Chief to get something done. Sean Connors asked how Mr. Leary felt. Mr. Leary said no one fought harder than him for the new ladder truck. Chief Cassidy said he would like to think that he fought harder for the ladder truck. Mr. Leary said he doesn't know the right number yet. Mr. Dellicker said it's a real number, don't carve it into pieces or chop a percentage off of it. Carl Damigella said this is the best fire department in the state. They need more life insurance and they will take what they can get for compensation.

Mr. Leary thanked everyone for taking the time to meet with the Selectmen.

AT 10:30 P.M. MR. CONLEY MOVED, MR. LEARY SECONDED AND IT WAS VOTED TWO IN FAVOR WITH MR. MARSDEN ABSENT TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: _____

Paul D. Le Beau
Town Administrator