

WEST WINDSOR SELECTBOARD

Draft Minutes

November 22, 2010

Present: Glenn Seward, Tom Kenyon, Bruce Boedtke, Cathy Boedtke, Malisa Williams, Mike Spackman, Bill Young, Cathy Archibald, Jim Kenyon, Ralph Johnson, Nancy Gaynor, Susan Odden, Kristen Willis, Andy Tufts, Martha Harrison

- 1) Call to Order – Selectboard Chair Glenn Seward called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
- 2) Discuss ambulance contracts – Glenn thanked the members of the FAST Squad for their service and for attending the meeting to discuss the proposals for ambulance service from Windsor and Golden Cross. Windsor's contract is offered at \$12,804 for the year, and Golden Cross's contract is offered at \$9,603. Glenn said the FAST Squad members have worked with the two ambulance services so the Selectboard is looking to them for input. Glenn said Windsor's contract is somewhat less than it was last year and would not require the Town of West Windsor to be responsible for unpaid bills. Glenn noted that Windsor Ambulance carries extrication equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus. Glenn said his personal view is that the money is secondary; he wants the best possible service for the town. Bruce asked if either ambulance company offers a service that the other doesn't. Ralph said Golden Cross provides oxygen tanks and Windsor doesn't. Bill Young asked if all of Windsor's ambulances carry extrication equipment. Glenn said no; the ones that are primarily used for transport do not carry extrication equipment. Kristen said that Golden Cross can provide extrication equipment but cannot guarantee a crew that is trained to use it. However, Kristen added, the fire department is trained to use the equipment. Glenn asked if extrication equipment has been required in West Windsor in the recent past. Ralph said no. Jim said he's not aware of extrication equipment being used in West Windsor in the past 51 years. Malisa said it's difficult to do a comparison because the purpose of the EMS system is to be prepared for "what ifs" and to plan for the worst case scenario. Malisa said her main concern is getting the patients whatever resources they need as quickly as possible. Susan said the biggest issue is response time; with Golden Cross coming from another state, there has been an increase in response time to some of the farther reaches of our town. Nancy asked in what percentage of calls is response time really going to make a difference. Susan said that goes back to the "what if" situation. Nancy asked how often Golden Cross covers for Windsor. Susan said not often anymore. Nancy disagreed. Nancy said there are a lot of people here who work for Windsor Ambulance and are familiar with it. Nancy wondered what's going to happen next year; is Windsor going to raise their price to \$17,000 because they need to buy a new ambulance and they don't have the money? Susan said she would love to see West Windsor served by Windsor ambulance again. Susan said she doesn't have a problem with Golden Cross but they generally want to repeat the assessment that has already been done by the West Windsor FAST Squad, many of whom are trained EMTs who also work for Windsor Ambulance. Susan said West Windsor is part of the Windsor community; we bank there, our hospital is there. Susan said she can't see Windsor offering a reasonable price this year and then increasing it substantially next year. Glenn said from 2007 to 2009, Windsor's rate was \$13.50 per capita, and this year it's \$12.00 per capita. Jim said the Fire Chief used to come up with the rate but now the Town Manager comes up with the rate. Andy said he thinks the Fire Chief came up with the rate this year. Susan said if Windsor raised their rates substantially next year, we could go back to Golden Cross. Nancy asked how we know that Golden Cross will take us back. Malisa said the ultimate goal is to treat patients; if someone has a stroke they have a very limited amount of time to get to the next level of care and every minute counts. Nancy said she has seen what happens as a first responder, as an ambulance attendant, and in the emergency room and she is not saying that time is not important but she doesn't think that there's a huge difference here in the quality of care. Nancy said she has asked everyone at FAST Squad meetings if they are happy with Golden Cross and no one has reported any problems. Glenn said Dale Girard from Golden Cross has said that the reason for the price discrepancy between the two ambulance services is that Golden Cross is "the Wal-Mart of ambulance services"; they make their money in

volume. Cathy Boedtger said she generally finds the EMTs from Golden Cross easier to work with. Cathy Boedtger added that Windsor Ambulance has never come to West Windsor to meet the FAST Squad and Fire Department volunteers. Cathy Boedtger agreed with Susan that West Windsor is more connected to Windsor as a community, but she thinks the EMTs from both services are equally qualified. Cathy Boedtger suggested that the Selectboard talk to Windsor about West Windsor's need to have some control over costs. Bruce said the difference in cost is almost 45%, which is considerable. Bruce said requiring West Windsor to pick up the tab for people who don't pay is unacceptable. Bill said he was listening to a call last night and it was 19 minutes from the time the tone went out until Windsor Ambulance arrived on scene, and that was for a call in Windsor. Jim asked if the Selectboard has considered asking for a five year contract. Bruce said that's a good point. Kristen asked if the cost of Golden Cross is the same this year as last year. Glenn said yes. Mike said Golden Cross has charged the Town of Weathersfield the same price for the past 12 years. Andy said ambulance services make their money by billing patients and most West Windsor patients have insurance so, because Golden Cross knows they will be able to collect, they can offer a cheaper contract. Tom said he recently heard a call for Windsor to put a battery in their other ambulance so they could use it. Tom said Golden Cross has an almost unlimited supply of ambulances and Windsor does not. Tom added that Windsor's ambulances are all old and will need to be replaced and they have not addressed that problem. Tom said Golden Cross's response to a recent call where a patient was stranded by flood waters was outstanding. Tom said the response times of Golden Cross may be a minute or two longer but they're always on the job. Tom said he is not aware of any complaints about Golden Cross. Tom said there have been a number of times when Windsor has been tied up and they have had Golden Cross on standby. Tom said as far as he knows, Golden Cross has always responded to the right address. Malisa said the FAST Squad always meets the ambulance. Bruce said he hasn't heard anything terribly negative about Golden Cross. Malisa said response time is a negative. Nancy said she talked to about 20 people on Friday and none of them said they were unhappy with Golden Cross. Susan said on one call the patient asked what was taking Windsor Ambulance so long; she didn't know that Golden Cross provides ambulance service for West Windsor now. Susan said the patient was shocked that the ambulance was coming all the way from Claremont. Kristen said a lot of people aren't going to have an opinion until they actually have to deal with it. Glenn said he's not sure why we need to make this decision by November 27th if the contract is not up until the end of the year. Jim said it has always been that way. Nancy said the FAST Squad has to go before District 9 next week with their prepared license, which has to be signed by the medical director and the transport service, so that's why she asked the Selectboard to decide on an ambulance service in November. The Selectboard agreed to consider the comments made this evening and make a decision at their meeting on Wednesday morning.

- 3) Other Business – Heat: Glenn said the walls of Martha's office keep the heat from going into Cathy's office. Glenn suggested getting an estimate from Dead River on the cost of running a duct out to the meeting area with an outlet in Martha's office. Tom noted that the cold air return is also in Martha's office. Repeater: Bruce asked about the repeater. Glenn said the question is whether or not we can get along without it for now. Jim asked Glenn to see what the current owners of the ski area think about putting a padlock on the valve house and giving the fire department a key. Glenn agreed to mention it to them.
- 4) Adjourn – **Bruce made a motion to adjourn at 6:40 PM. Tom seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Harrison