

Transitioning to a Fire-Based Ambulance Service

Important Facts to Consider

A few discussions with Fire Chief Eric Lambert about the proposed increases in the Fire Department and Ambulance Service budgets led to the following in-depth and compelling analysis from the Fire Chief.

This year of transition will be marked by the planned July 1st departure from Tri-Town EMS.



“Extensive research done in 2022 found that the Tri-Town Ambulance Service (TTEMS) was becoming very expensive. When started in 2013, the overall budget was roughly \$562,794 per year for one ambulance (no firefighting capabilities). Allenstown’s share has been just under 50%. Here are the budgets for several years, showing that they have more than doubled in about 10 years.

- 2013 Tri-Town EMS Budget = \$562,794
- 2022 Tri-Town EMS Budget = \$1,058,000
- 2023 Tri-Town EMS Budget = \$1,161,000 (proposed before end of contract)
- 2024 Tri-Town Projected Budget = \$1,203,998

“The Select Board decided in 2022 to change direction based on the town’s anticipated growth and the difficulty of responding to calls with the old “on call” methods and limited personnel. The idea was to end the Tri-Town contract and cure two problems with a transition to a **Fire-Based Ambulance Service that provides Firefighters & EMTs for both services.**

“This can be done at a lower cost, and with the ability to collect revenue for ambulance transports which currently go to Tri-Town EMS. The potential amount of revenue is \$187,000 or more which will go to Allenstown. This revenue can be used to offset the cost of service thus bringing down expenses.

“(Fire Dept. 2024 Proposed Budget, \$803,450) – (Billing Revenue, \$186,750) = Total budget of \$616,700 (to provide both fire and ambulance services).

“Part of the 2024 budget increase pays for the final six months of the Tri-Town contract (until July 1st) concurrent with the cost of the first half year of the town’s fire-based EMS service. With an estimated 9% growth due to new residents at Hillsbrook Village and 25 Canal, the town will experience more service needs and thus more revenue.

“So what’s the plan from here? The plan is to staff the Fire Department 24 hours a day with an ambulance service that can cross-staff to the fire apparatus, thus providing a better service and solving two problems! Right now the Fire Department is only staffed Monday to Friday 8 am to 5 pm.

“The town has grown a lot in the past year with two new buildings that have brought the population up by more than 9%. The new assisted living facility along with the new mill apartment building will increase the volume of service needs and provide more revenues with billing income and tax revenue!

“If the proposed town budget is not approved, significant reductions in all town services would result. The increase for Fire and Ambulance Service in the town operating budget is an investment in the transition to a Fire-Based Service to build a better response and care level.

“The bottom line is that, with the proposed budget, you get full-time 24/7 coverage from your Fire Department.”