

# **PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICE COMMITTEE**

**Report to the**

## **SALEM BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**JUNE 2015**

### **MEMBERS**

**Lewis Buckley, Chair**

**John Cunningham**

**Joseph Duncan**

**James Fogarty**

**Janet Griggs**

**Charles Weston**



**REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICE COMMITTEE  
TO THE SALEM BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
JUNE 2015**

In December 2014, the Salem Board of Selectmen appointed Lewis Buckley (Chair), John Cunningham, Joseph Duncan, James Fogarty, Janet Griggs, and Charles Weston to serve on the Public Safety Service Committee (PSSC) with the following charge:

**Review Public Safety Service Organizational Analysis prepared by Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI) in October 2014 and report back to the Board of Selectmen on Areas on Implementation.**

The PSSC met monthly from January through June of 2015, studying and discussing each individual recommendation contained in Articles II through IV as contained on Pages 11 through 17 of the MRI Analysis and taking positions on each MRI recommendation as follows:

- Indication of Agreement, Disagreement, or Recommendation of Further Study/Discussion at a later time or pending further developments;
- Additional comments (*italicized*) as needed; and
- Alterations of wordings from the original Analysis as needed, with deleted words shown in strike-through text and added words *italicized*, so that both the original wording and recommended changes are easily visible to the reader.

In making every effort to balance Salem's constituencies regarding the issues being studied, the PSSC included members of both major political parties, both fire companies, both genders, the Board of Finance, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Board of Selectmen.

The report begins on the next page.

**SYNOPSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**MRI ANALYSIS, PAGE 11s**

**ARTICLE II: Emergency Management**

II.1 The Emergency Management Director should not have other responsibilities that preclude him/her from being available to the Town for all disasters and at other times as required to perform the duties. If the current level of availability to the Town of Salem cannot be improved, a new Emergency Manager should be appointed.

PSSC: Agree

II.2 The Emergency Management Committee should be restructured to include liaisons from the Salem Volunteer Fire Company and the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company.

PSSC: Agree

II.3 The Town of Salem should continue to update their Emergency Operations Plan to continually meet the needs of the community.

PSSC: Agree, though obvious.

II.4 The Emergency Manager must ~~train both Departments~~ *ensure that members of Salem Emergency Services and all other personnel referred to in the Salem Emergency Operations Plan will be trained* relative to specific actions, roles, and responsibilities in the event of natural and man-made disasters.

PSSC: Agree as amended (see italics).

PSSC recommends references to individual Departments/Fire Companies be replaced by the single reference, "Salem Emergency Services" (SES). That change has been implemented throughout this report wherever practical, using the SES acronym.

II.5 The Emergency Manager should develop a brief action oriented plan for how ~~each Department~~ *SES* would fit into a larger regional operation in the event of a large natural or man-made disaster.

PSSC: Agree as amended. Recommend implementation be rolled into implementation of Article II.4, above.

II.6 ~~Both Departments~~ *SES*, along with the DPW, Law Enforcement personnel, and the ~~Selectmen~~ *First Selectman and his/her alternate*, should participate in two exercises hosted by Emergency Management on an annual basis; one should be a tabletop exercise, and the second a practical exercise which should shift from local to regional focus over three years.

PSSC: Agree as amended. Recommend implementation be rolled into implementation of Article II.4, above.

## **ARTICLE III: CODE COMPLIANCE, FIRE PREVENTION, AND THE FIRE MARSHALL**

III.1 A single program of public education for the young and the elderly should be developed and administered by the Fire Marshall. ~~Members of both Departments~~ *SES* should participate in this program.

PSSC: Agree as amended. PSSC is confident that the recommended public education for young people is being achieved, but we are less certain that the elderly are receiving this education.

III.2 The Fire Marshall should meet regularly with the two fire chiefs to discuss issues around fire protection within the community, with particular emphasis on the preplanning of target hazards, *based on a hazardous risk analysis (HRA)*.

PSSC: Agree as amended.

## **ARTICLE IV: FIRE SERVICES**

### **IV.A: Organizational Structure**

IV.A1 The SVFC and the GLVFC should ~~immediately~~ alter their bylaws to accommodate the single operating unit model under the direction and authority of one Fire ~~Chief~~ *Services Administrator* appointed by the Town.

PSSC: Disagree unless it becomes necessary. The first step would be for the Town to define a coordinating position/job description; that may at some point require the Fire Companies to consider modifications to their bylaws.

IV.A2 A single ~~Fire Chief~~ *Fire Services Administrator* for the Community, ~~with command authority over all fire/rescue operations, should be appointed as soon as possible. and full consolidation should be targeted to occur within 36 months, after which a full time, professionally trained Fire Chief should be selected through an open competitive process.~~ This position should have full administrative and operational control of *and compliance authority over* fire services within the Town of Salem and *should* report directly to the ~~Town~~ *Board of Selectmen*.

PSSC: Agree as amended. The complete amended text is as follows: *A single Fire Services Administrator for the Community should be appointed as soon as possible. This position should have full administrative control of and compliance authority over fire services with the Town of Salem, and should report directly to the Board of Selectmen.*

IV.A3 Until full consolidation is achieved, the position of Assistant Fire Chief should be created to replace the current position of fire Chief in the SVFC and GLVFC, and these positions will retain responsibility for their respective stations. These positions should be reviewed twice per year by the Fire Chief.

PSSC: Disagree.

IV.A4 ~~The two Departments~~ *SES* needs to function as a cohesive unit and ~~move~~ *continue moving* closer together operationally, ~~and as a first step methodology to accomplish this goal, all~~ *All* training should be joint training.

PSSC: Agree as amended.

IV.A5 ~~In the spring of 2015, and annually thereafter~~ *When needed*, the Town of Salem should apply for a SAFER grant in an effort to obtain federal funding to offset the expense of a limited presence of career staffing during critical coverage periods.

PSSC: Agree as amended. Note that SAFER grant have significant conditions attached.

#### **IV.B Fire/Rescue Operations**

IV.B1 One set of Policies and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) should be crafted by a joint committee composed ~~from~~ *of* members of both departments. Once completed, this operational guidance should apply to both Departments *virtually* without exception.

PSSC: Agree as amended.

IV.B2 Mutual aid districts and automatic alarm assignments should be ~~strengthened~~ *reviewed annually*.

PSSC: Agree as amended.

IV.B3 The use of a more delegated approach to incident command should ~~be obtained~~ *continue to be updated* through training and a series of joint exercises.

PSSC: Agree as amended, though no existing problem has been identified.

IV.B4 Formal pre-plans, including mapping and a hazardous materials inventory, should be developed for all commercial and industrial properties. This information should be shared with dispatch, and a policy should be developed indicating specific information that should be broadcast during a response.

PSSC: Agree; recommend coordinating with appropriate town agencies (e.g. Fire Marshall, Emergency Management Committee, building Official.)

IV.B5 Primary and secondary water supply points should be designated for each address. This information should be stored in the computer-aided data base and broadcast to responding units at the start of a fire incident response.

PSSC: Agree; already being done regularly as appropriate.

IV.B6 Dispatch should announce and confirm which water supply point will be utilized during a given incident.

PSSC: Redundant; already covered under Article IV.B5.

IV.B7 All ~~personnel~~ *firefighters* should be trained on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standard pertaining to initial fireground operations. All personnel should endeavor to adhere to this “Two In/Two Out” standard with few exceptions.

PSSC: Agree as amended; already being done on a regular basis.

IV.B8 All *emergency* personnel should be trained on the National Fire Incident Management System, and the use of incident command should be strengthened and expanded *to include appropriate Town employees and officials*.

PSSC: Agree as amended.

IV.B9 *All emergency* personnel should be alerted through a combination of radio pagers and secondary smart phone notification software such as Second Signal or E-dispatches.

PSSC: Agree as amended.

#### **IV.C Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

IV.C1 Develop a stronger system of semi-automatic defibrillator equipped first responders. Based on American Heart Association Guidelines, it should be the Town’s goal to have a first responder on the scene within six (6) minutes.

PSSC: Agree that this is a laudable goal, but there is considerable expense involved.

IV.C2 When the current ambulance is replaced, it should be retained as a mechanical backup.

PSSC: Disagree; recommend using mutual aid instead. Also, retaining old ambulance as a second ambulance requires state approval, and storage would be an issue.

IV.C3 Relocate the ambulance and the firefighter/EMT currently stationed at Gardner Lake to the Salem station to provide more adequate and safe staff coverage and overall enhanced deployment to the entire community.

PSSC: Disagree. 1) Overall medical response times would increase, and 2) these personnel have other emergency response responsibilities that would be detrimentally impacted.

#### **IV.D Fiscal Analysis**

IV.D1 The allocation of resources must reflect the needs of the community as a whole. Given the two existing departments, careful thought should be given to purchasing apparatus that provides for coordinated, ~~complimentary~~ *complementary* services, not exclusive service.

PSSC: Agree (see IV.A.2).

#### **IV.E Recruitment and Retention of Personnel**

IV.E1 There needs to be a conscious and strategic recruitment and retention program jointly operated by ~~both Departments~~ *SES*. There should be an active recruitment program that seeks out and markets ~~the Departments~~ *SES* to prospective members.

PSSC: Agree, noting that this is a balancing act between cost and benefit; recommend continued attention to the issue.

IV.E2 The process of bringing a member ~~on the Department~~ *into SES* should follow a written plan in an effort to be consistent and should be timely. Once a member is brought on and begins to progress through a training program, there should be a ~~Department an~~ *SES* orientation which reviews policies, procedures, and expectations, and provides general information. In addition, ~~the Departments~~ *SES* should develop a mentoring program that assigns a senior firefighter to be a mentor for the new person.

PSSC: Agree; recommend that these practices, most of which are already being done, should be adopted, formalized in writing, and made consistent throughout SES.

IV.E3 A SAFER grant for the recruitment and retention of volunteer personnel should be pursued in 2016.

PSSC: Agree.

IV.E4 ~~The Fire Chief should assign one of the full-time members to manage and develop recruitment and retention efforts. The Fire Services Administrator should ensure each company has an individual responsible for managing/developing recruitment and retention.~~

PSSC: Agree as amended.

#### **IV.F Deployment and Response of Personnel**

IV.F1 Each member should have a copy of the ~~Department's~~ *Department's* Policies, Procedures, and Standard Operating Guidelines *of his/her Department and SES*.

PSSC: Agree as amended; already in effect.

IV.F2 As a goal, operations should be in conformance with the OSHA Two In/Two Out rule.

PSSC: Agree; already in effect (see IV.B7).

#### **IV.G Fire Apparatus and Capital Planning**

IV.G1 The current ambulance should be retained as a mechanical backup when the next ambulance is purchased.

PSSC: Disagree; see IV.C2.

IV.G2 Based on the decreasing frequency and severity of brushfires, the two existing brush units should be replaced with a single unit.

PSSC: Disagree; having two units is an advantage in severe storm cleanups, and they are inexpensive to maintain and operate.

IV.G3 Automatic mutual aid for water supply should be strengthened.

PSSC: Agree conceptually, though this is an obvious general idea, not a specific recommendation.

IV.G4 Tanker 127 was found to be serviceable in 2012. Based on the recent safety upgrades, this should be monitored for safety and surplused at the end of its serviceable lifespan.

PSSC: Agree.

IV.G5 In 2022, a larger capacity engine/tanker should replace Tanker 127 and ET 127.

PSSC: More information needed; recommend the Town revisit this at a later time.

IV.G6 The purchase of a new rescue boat should be reevaluated based on need and call volume.

PSSC: Agree as a general principle.

IV.G7 The Town should provide the SVFC and the GLVFC the materials to develop a joint training site over a three-year period. The town should own this training facility.

BSSC: Agree as a general principle, noting that there will be many details to work out.

IV.G8 Future purchases should consolidate apparatus to the level of the ideal apparatus set identified through this study.

PSSC: Disagree with the "ideal apparatus set." (See IV.G1 and IV.G2 as examples.)

IV.G9 The Town should provide the SVFC the materials to construct a permanent storage building for fire service and emergency management operations.

PSSC: Agree.

IV.G10 The Town should install a diesel exhaust system in the Salem station if it is to function as the primary facility, and in both stations if consolidation is not pursued.

PSSC: Agree as amended; in the Capital Budget for 2015-16.

IV.G11 The Town should install high traction epoxy flooring in the apparatus bays of both stations.

PSSC: Agree, with two important caveats: 1) this is a high cost item, and 2) both the condition of the underlying materials and the installation process itself must be near ideal. Recommend very strong warranty.

#### **IV.H Fire Service Facilities**

IV.H1 An agreement for the Town to acquire and operate the GLVFC station as part of an integrated municipal Fire/Rescue operation should be completed to provide the Town all rights and responsibilities of ownership and operation. No further equipment should be purchased for the GLVFC until the transaction has been completed and a plan for apparatus deployment based upon overall responsiveness to community needs has been developed.

PSSC: Disagree in terms of any immediate action. This is a complex issue that will require discussion and decision-making at a much later time.

IV.H2 In the very long run, planning for development of any future facilities should be undertaken in the context of expected growth and associated response times in concert with surrounding communities.

PSSC: Agree, though obvious.

## **IV.I Firefighter Health and Safety**

IV.I1 ~~Both Departments~~ *SES* should be trained in and follow the OSHA Two In/Two Out rule. Unless four *qualified* personnel are on the scene, no interior operations should commence, unless a visible rescue situation exists.

PSSC: Agree as amended; this is current practice.

IV.I2 An Accountability Officer needs to be assigned to track personnel from both stations. This is an essential role, especially considering the response of personnel directly to the scene.

PSSC: Disagree as stated. Accountability is the responsibility of the Incident Commander, and a county-wide Accountability System is in place already.

IV.I3 Review combined Policies or Standard Operating Guidelines at each training meeting.

PSSC: Agree; already in progress, being worked into the system.

IV.I4 All personnel should be assigned portable radios with an internal emergency notification feature that can be identified to the specific firefighter at the Dispatch Center.

PSSC: Agree in concept, and recommend that future radio purchases should have this ability. However, the current 911 Dispatch Center does not have the capability of using such a system.

IV.I5 All personnel should be trained to the Firefighter I/II (NFPA 1001/1002) level prior to permitting them to be utilized for any interior operations.

PSSC: Agree; already the case.

IV.I6 A new gear dryer should be purchased through the operational budget or through a FireAct health and safety grant at the SVFC.

PSSC: Agree; already in the budget.

IV.I7 Assign the ambulance and both daytime firefighters to the Central Station, and have them respond in the same vehicle as appropriate for the call.

PSSC: Disagree; see IV.C3.

## IV.J Training and Development

IV.J1 Develop a formal joint training program that is documented with lesson plans and attendance rosters.

PSSC: Agree; in development now.

IV.J2 Finalize and post a training schedule on-line and in both stations.

PSSC: Agree.

IV.J3 Develop individual training files, or a computer database, that can document and track training and certification of personnel.

PSSC: Agree; already in progress.

IV.J4 All personnel should be encouraged to obtain fire service certifications offered through the Connecticut Fire Academy and/or the National Fire Academy.

PSSC: Agree; already in progress.

IV.J5 Fire Officer I certification should be required either as a condition of, or within ~~12~~ 24 months of, promotion.

PSSC: Agree as amended.

IV.J6 National Incident Management System (NIMS) training should be delivered to all personnel, and the expanded use of incident command should be practiced in conjunction with every practical training sessions.

PSSC: Agree as amended, noting that NIMS training is already a Federal requirement and is in effect.

IV.J7 Appoint a training officer to develop an enhanced and coordinated training effort ~~between the two stations~~ throughout SES.

PSSC: Disagree, as long as current organizational structure exists; two training officers currently work together to ensure coordinated training. This may need to be revisited if organizational structure changes in the future.

IV.J8 There should be at least three monthly training sessions, two focused on fire service training and one devoted to specialized training.

PS SC: Agree; this standard is already being exceeded.

IV.J9 All training sessions should be conducted jointly with personnel attending from both stations. The location of training should be rotated so all personnel become familiar with all of the towns equipment and facilities.

PSS C: Agree; this is already being coordinated by the Training Officers (see IV.J7).

IV.J10 An internal officer orientation should be provided to each newly appointed officer.

PSSC: Agree; already in effect.

This concludes the report of the Public Safety Service Committee to the Salem Board of Selectmen.

Respectfully submitted,

Lewis Buckley, Chair  
John Cunningham  
Joseph Duncan  
James Fogarty  
Janet Griggs  
Charles Weston