

Emergency Communications Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2023

Present: Frank DiFruscio, Chairman, and John Allen, Selectmen

Attendees: Gene Chandler, Vicki Garland, Fire Chief Jay Henry, Fire Chief Jeff Currier, Kevin Bennett, Building Inspector and Hank Benesh.

A meeting between Bartlett Fire, Jackson Fire, Bartlett-Jackson Ambulance and the Bartlett and Jackson Selectmen took place to discuss emergency communications.

Chief Henry started the meeting by reviewing the current problems with the Tyrol Radio System. He said that he would like to discuss both the current issues and the future needs to the whole system. He said that it will be an expensive item. Chief Henry would also like to discuss how Hart's Location will contribute to the system costs.

The current location, which is on the top of Tyrol, provides great reception for Jackson, but there are some limitations in Bartlett Village and Crawford Notch. The other thing that Chief Henry mentioned was that the current site is remote due to its elevation. The antenna has been replaced a number of times, and one never knows what weather events will impact this site, and what repairs may be needed. Parts can also be difficult to obtain.

There are three radios that make the system work. One, in the set of three, is a new radio and it is more computerized than the other two older radios. That is the one that is currently causing more issues. Chief Henry is hoping that can be reprogrammed in order to fix this problem.

The Mt. Washington Observatory also shares some space in the building. Chief Henry said that their radio caused some interference during the recent weather event. This was the same weather event where the entire radio system went down, and Bartlett and Jackson had to dispatch manually with help from volunteers to monitor incoming calls.

Gene Chandler asked about the history of the location, which Chief Henry reviewed. Jackson currently has a ground lease which allows for use of the property. Gene said that the Observatory should find another location so they do not have access to the Bartlett/Jackson radios. Kevin Bennett said the Observatory does monitor our battery system, which Chief Henry agreed is helpful. Kevin did say that if the Observatory does continue to use the space, they should contribute to costs if their system causes any interference.

Chief Henry said there needs to be discussion regarding access to this location during the winter months. Chief Henry has always used his own snowmobile, but it may not always be available. Chief Henry said he would love to find a used snow cat to solve the problem. This would also help protect someone from the elements while trying to get up there.

Chief Henry said that there should be a study to determine if Tyrol is the best location for the radio system. He then discussed the locations that do not get great reception with the radios on Tyrol. Chief Currier also discussed reception and issues that he has faced. He said that there is almost no reception in the notch. Chief Currier agreed that a study would help determine the best

location for the needed radio system, and he feels that it should be done this year rather than be pushed back to next year.

There was discussion on how Hart's Location would contribute to this system. Bartlett does have a contract to provide services to Hart's Location, so these additional costs will have to be determined. Vicki Garland asked, if it is determined that Hart's Location needed to be one of the multiple locations required for the microwave radio system that was discussed, if they paid the seventy-five thousand dollars for their system, would that suffice as their contribution? Chief Currier suggested that they also contribute toward the cost of the study. Chief Henry also added that it might make more sense to have Hart's Location's contribution be based on the total cost, rather than just the equipment needed in their Town since the entire system works together.

Chief Henry said that future maintenance costs will need to be considered. He also addressed the need to have an emergency option. The suggestion is to place an antenna on the fire station as an emergency back up location.

There was further discussion on what the Sherriff's Department, State Police and DOT use for radios. Chief Currier said there are 167 square miles that need to be covered with the radio system.

The suggestion as step one is to get the propagation study done. Chief Henry said that Ossipee Mountain Electronics can perform this study.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Erik Atwell

To view the full video recording of this meeting visit www.jacksonflicks.com/Jackson