



TOWN OF BOXFORD

Date: April 17, 2024
From: Ellen S. Guerin, Emergency Response Advisory Committee Chair
To: Selectboard
Re: Funding Request to Engage Consultant Services

In response to concerns raised by residents about emergency response times at its meeting on September 11, 2023, the Selectboard formed the Emergency Response Advisory Committee on November 6, 2023. Nine members were appointed:

Peter Perkins, Selectboard (former Fire Chief)
Michael White, Finance Committee
James Riter, Police Chief
Brian Geiger, Fire Chief
Warren Gould, Communications Director
Ellen Guerin, member at large
Robert Hazelwood, member at large
Mira Clark, member at large
Ashley Wheeler, member at large

The committee was charged with performing a comprehensive analysis of the town's 3-tiered emergency response system and identifying strategies to improve service through efficiencies and reduced emergency response times.

The committee met five (5) times between December 12, 2023 and March 13, 2024 to collect, review and analyze emergency response time data for 2022-2023. Data sources were from:

Communications Department PAMET Records Management System
Fire Department Emergency Call Report
Cataldo Atlantic and Pridestar Trinity contracted ambulance companies serving Boxford
Records from surrounding towns providing mutual aid ambulance response in Boxford

The output from the various systems was voluminous and incompatible in format to merge the data electronically, so it became necessary to do so manually in a labor-intensive manner. Instances of missing, erroneous, inconclusive and irrelevant data was identified requiring individual time-consuming review of original audio recordings of calls. The committee changed its focus from historical emergency call data to monthly review of current 2024 data.

The Communications PAMET Records Management System is currently transitioning to a new Pro-Phoenix platform, introducing another challenge for a meaningful data merge.

At its meeting on March 13th, ERAC voted unanimously to request that the Selectboard seek funding at Town Meeting to engage the services of a consultant to assist the committee in its charge to provide a comprehensive report of existing emergency response services with a phased plan including recommendations for reduced response times, each with a budgetary impact. The following are some of the ERAC considerations identified in making its recommendation:

- Public Safety officials are the only committee members with access to raw emergency call data (HIPAA). Time constraints and other professional responsibilities prevent system-wide data gathering and review of outlier calls in a time-sensitive manner.
- Other committee members, although willing, are volunteers with other employment obligations. Mira Clark has devoted extensive time in preparing a comprehensive document that remains in-process awaiting data and committee consensus on future direction.
- Technical difficulties in merging data from Communications PAMET, Fire Department call log, two (2) ambulance system records and other mutual aid call records
- Possible bias or lack of objectivity in review of current three-tiered emergency response program and recommendations for improved efficiency.
- Collection of data from peer communities and consolidation for fair comparison of data