

**Rutland County Fire Mutual Aid Association, Inc.**  
*Minutes of the January 29, 2006 Meeting*

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The meeting was held at Rutland Town Fire Department and was called to order by President Schlachter at 7:00 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**SICK AND DISTRESSED:**

None reported.

**ROLL CALL:**

*Department Members Present:* Benson Fire Department (1), Chittenden Fire Department (1), Clarendon Fire Department (3), Danby ó Mt. Tabor Fire Department (2), Pittsford Fire Department (2), Poultney Fire Department (2), Rutland City Fire Department (1), Rutland Town Fire Department (2), Shrewsbury Fire Department (1), Wallingford Fire Department (1), Wells Fire Department (2), West Haven Fire Department (2), West Rutland Fire Department (2)

*Officers Present:* Chief Robert Schlachter, President; Chief Tom Fucile, Vice-President; Michael Skaza, Secretary/Treasurer

*Coordinators Present:* Chief Robert Schlachter (C1), Michael Skaza (C2), Tim Kerber (C3)

*Other Guests:* None.

**APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2005 and December 11, 2005 meetings. PASSED.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

President Schlachter reported on his activities since the last meeting including attendance at several fire service meetings and functions. Much of his time has been spent lately dealing with the radio problems with out Herrick Mountain Transmitter.

After many communications with the owner of the Grandpaø Knob Tower Site, it appears that it will be possible for us to locate a transmitter there. Work is being performed now by at least two vendors to determine what would be required for equipment to properly serve our area of need. Initial estimates are quite high and the Association may have to decide how to fund this project if we go forward. President Schlachter acknowledged that it may require that we increase the fees paid by individual Departments for State Dispatch. This is a decision that the Association may be faced with in the future, depending on the findings of our radio technicians. President Schlachter stated that he will continue to seek alternative funding for this project in an effort to avoid fee increases, but reminded the group that there have been no increases in several years and our expenses continue to rise.

**VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

No report.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

The Treasurer's Report was presented. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted. PASSED.

**STATE DISPATCH:**

As reported in the President's report, the Grandpa's Knob Transmitter project remains underway in the fact-finding phase.

President Schlachter stated that the Rutland City Fire Department has recently upgraded its communications system and now has the capability to provide back-up dispatching for some or our County Departments, but the system is limited to the radio range of the station.

President Schlachter has received complaints from some of our system users regarding Departments broadcasting administrative messages using the dispatch frequency. The use of the dispatch frequency for announcing administrative messages is prohibited by our system policy.

President Schlachter issued a reminder to State Dispatch users that the dispatch frequency is to be used for communications to or from State Dispatch only. Truck-to-truck, person-to-person, and person-to-truck transmissions are not permitted. This includes announcements to "switch to channel 20. Many chiefs present expressed concern once again that the dispatch frequency is experiencing too much traffic that must be conducted on the individual departmental operating frequencies.

It was asked if we could approach the PSAP Administrator, Laura Wallet with the idea of utilizing alarm cards at dispatch. It is possible that this system would allow more efficient and less confusing dispatching during mutual aid incidents for both dispatchers and responders. President Schlachter will discuss the issue with Laura.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A close watch is being kept on the 2006 Homeland Security Grant Funds. There is a fear in the fire service that there will be very limited, if any, funding for fire departments this year. Many have concerns that the State of Vermont will channel all of this money to the Statewide Communications Project. The Vermont State Firefighters' Association has a representative on this committee and is keeping our interests in mind.

Support 2 is still at Central Vermont Truck Repair awaiting final installation of some equipment. President Schlachter is trying to put pressure on them to finish the work so that the vehicle can be placed in service.

Chief Jones will have information on the coordination of the Firefighter II Challenge Exam at the March Meeting. This will include review sessions and the exam. Information will also be posted on the Rutland County Fire Mutual Aid web site.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Recent Mutual Aid Calls were reviewed.

This is an upcoming meeting sponsored by the Homeland Security Unit at the West Rutland School on February 7, 2006. All area emergency service organizations are encouraged to attend as there will be discussion on past and future programs and their associated requirements.

There will be a Fire Act Outreach Meeting at the Poultney Fire Department on February 8, 2006.

The Southern Vermont Regional Fire School will be held on April 29 and 30, 2006 at Mount St. Joseph's Academy in Rutland. Information will be made available on course offerings in February. The fire school will be offering four different sessions of ICS 700 training to allow departments to comply with the Presidential Directive for this training.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the proposed 2006 meeting schedule. PASSED. All meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and the meeting schedule is as follows:

March 26, 2006	Poultney Fire Department
May 21, 2006	Clarendon Fire Department
July 30, 2006	Shrewsbury Fire Department
September 24, 2006	Danby-Mt. Tabor Fire Department
December 3, 2006	West Rutland Fire Department

The Vermont State Firefighters' Awards Committee is rehabilitating the VSFA Awards Program. Area departments are encouraged to nominate members for these prestigious statewide awards. Many categories have gone unawarded in the past and it is certain that there are members of our departments who are worthy of such awards.

VSFA is working hard to get the workers compensation legislation corrected to include volunteer firefighters in the presumptive cardiac benefit language. The VSFA Legislative Committee is meeting with some key legislators and representatives of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns this week. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns has been a large opponent of including volunteers in this legislation.

The Governor's budget includes money to perform a summer study on firefighter recruitment and retention for the State of Vermont. The hope is that each fire department will be visited to express their views on the issue.

The Treasurer reported that all fire departments in Rutland County belong to the mutual aid association except for Middletown Springs. This is the highest that membership has been and we would like to include Middletown Springs. Chief Jones will approach them to see if there is any interest in belonging to our group. It was pointed out that our departments that neighbor them are working closely through mutual aid.

Benson Fire Department has recently placed an air support truck in service that is available to anyone who needs on-scene support.

Tim Perry is the new fire chief for the Ira Fire Department and Todd Fenton is the new fire chief for the Wells Fire Department.

With no other business at hand, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.  
PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Michael J. Skaza*

Michael J. Skaza  
Secretary/Treasurer