

Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact
March 19, 2026, Allenstown Fire Station
President Jim Morse Presiding

Call to Order 1900 - Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call Attendance - Towns: 15 Members: 28 Guests:

REPORTS

Secretary's Report – Dept. Chief Newbery

- Motion to dispense with the reading of the February minutes. Motion and second to accept the minutes as posted and distributed. Motion passed

Treasurer's Report –

- Motion and second to accept the report as posted and distributed. Motion passed.

Training Committee- Dept. Newbery

- Completed Meters class in Bow on Wednesday
- Completed NH State Police Bomb Squad training for the Compact on March 16.
- Spring forestry training – working with State Forestry. Bradford to host the west side
- Working with Bob Christensen for a workshop to develop a plan for communications failures. Schedule for March 31st.

HazMat Report Deputy Chief. Costello

The team took delivery of a new hazmat chemical identifier. The team has also received grant approval for a new vehicle. A review of the current hazmat grants approved and pending

Fire Marshal's Report

The report was distributed with the meeting announcement.

NHFST & EMS – No Report

NHIAC Report – Jim Heinz No report

WEBSITE – Gary Sleeper

Normal activity on the site. Several new postings

Concord Hospital Report

The next meeting is at the hospital. April 1st at 11:30. Discussion on In-Service times.

Dispatch Report – Dispatch Supervisor Jen Beets

Four new 9-1-1 direct connect phone lines have been installed at the dispatch center. The state has a new website – Fog light - to assist in identifying which dispatch area to contact for your current location. Another resource through NH 9-1-1 is NH 911 Cares. This will allow patients to register medical information that will be available for the dispatcher to see. This will be attached to a phone number. Reviewed a list of resources that are available through the NH Dept. of Emergency Services. If a resource is requested, the request should be through the 9-1-1 Supervisor. CAD upgrade on March 11 went well, with the only exception of the Town name being omitted from the report. Tyler has been notified and is working on the problem. For Crew Force to work with an iOS iPad, it must be capable of version 16.6 or newer.

Old Business Chief Gilbert

A failure of the microwave link between Craney and Gould Hill occurred this past week. RCM had to install a new device at Gould Hill and complete some complex re-programming. It took a full night to complete the fix and get the system operational. New Radio system – the committee travelled to Portland to view a set-up of the complete system. The committee accepted the system, and installation of the components has started. The installation at Kearsarge will be delayed due to access. The chief thanked the towns for assisting with providing access to the sites, including plowing and ATV use. Electrical work will need to be performed at all sites as the new system requires 240 volts to operate. The planned radio console project at dispatch has been delayed until the fall of 2026 to take full advantage of the warranty on that equipment. A reminder of the need to complete radio programming as the project is moving forward. There are still 3 towns that have not scheduled the reprogramming. Also, the emergency button will need to be programmed to transmit on the new frequency. A letter was sent to FCC regarding adjusting the distance of our request for the new frequency. This was the recommended workaround because we could not get the second letter from Keene DPW. The letter was received after the request, so we reverted to the original plan.

Rural Health Care Funds – the Compact collaborated with Cheshire County, Southwestern MA and Lakes Region on a grant proposal to improve radio communications for the ambulances in those regions. The State has received approval for the funds. Distribution of the funds will be coordinated through 4 separate agencies. The status of our proposal is currently undetermined.

Revenue and expense report on the request to admit four new towns into the Compact. The five contiguous towns would produce a revenue of approximately \$143,500. Total call volume for the towns would be 1,600 incidents. It is assumed that those five towns could be serviced with the current radio system. There are an additional three towns who have expressed interest. There would be radio upgrades required to provide service to these agencies. The revenue for these three and the previous 5 would be a total of 320,474. Discussion followed on funding for a peak daytime dispatcher and costs to add an additional dispatcher to each shift. The cost to add a full-time dispatcher to each shift would be approximately \$490,300. A Motion was made to table the requests for membership until the next meeting. Motion passed.

New Business –

Chief Blanchette gave verbal notification of Loudon's possible intent to withdraw from the compact. He acknowledged that Loudon would comply with the By-Laws' requirement for an 18-month notice of withdrawal. Some of the concerns noted were the increasing costs to run the dispatch center, the lack of funding for radio reprogramming, issues that occurred at mutual-aid fire incidents, and the towns'

sending apparatus with uncertified firefighters. Chief Blanchette asked President Morse to form a committee in the next 21 days to work on Strategic Planning.

Town Meeting Reports

Pittsfield – The operating budget failed.

Epsom – They got approval to purchase a Tanker and portable radios. Chief Yeaton discussed his concern about Towns responding to mutual aid incidents with untrained personnel. He requested a survey of the towns for certified F/F's

Hillsboro – Budget approved, and a new Pumper/tanker approved. Discussion followed about sending a cover truck and using coverage from the scene.

Loudon – The town meeting did not go well. A resident expressed that strategy and tactics were done poorly at a fire in town. Chief Blanchette also expressed concerns with the Compacts' RIT operations and scene accountability.

Chichester – They had success in increasing the wage line. Adding another per-diem, and they were able to get night staffing back to what it was in 2024.

Canterbury – Budget passed. Will be replacing the current Rescue vehicle with the current chief's command vehicle and a new command vehicle.

Pembroke – Budget passed. Did get approval for some Capital reserve expenses.

Boscawen – Got approval for an addition to the fire station. The Penacook Rescue budget passed.

Hooksett – The third year with a default budget. Capital budget – New ambulance and radio equipment approved.

Incident Review –

Reviewed the ongoing challenges with pump operators at rural water supply operations. It has been an issue with the LDH supply line, connected directly to a tank fill. This was the limiting factor. Suggested that water supply officers check the entire system when pressure increases are requested.

Hillsboro incident with a barricaded suspect. The incident went well, thanks to the coordination of the NHSP SWAT team. Unified command and accountability worked very well. A deck gun was eventually used to persuade the suspect to give up.

Warner Highway garage fire. Destroyed one plow truck, causing extensive smoke damage throughout.

Next meeting – Capital Area office on April 16th.

Motion with a second to adjourn at 20:25