

TOWN OF BRATTLEBORO

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PRESS RELEASE

TO: Local Media

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From: Town Manager's Office

For Immediate Release:

Press Release and Statement

Brattleboro Fire Department to Transition to Joint Fire/EMS Services – (4.11.2022)

On March 25th, 2022, Chief Drew Hazelton of Rescue Inc. informed the Selectboard and Town Manager that Rescue Inc. would no longer be providing emergency medical services (EMS) for the Town of Brattleboro as of July 1st, 2022. The Town thanks the dedicated members of Rescue Inc. for their many years of service in our town. Their excellent help and dedication to the community have been appreciated. We know that they will continue to provide that high level of service to their remaining customers in our surrounding municipalities.

After careful consideration of various options, The Town will be shifting from a private provider to a joint Fire/EMS service, offering patient care from the scene to the hospital with transport service. This Municipal Fire/EMS model is the most efficient and effective standard practice for the rapid delivery of medical care. It is currently being utilized in a highly successful manner by 5 of the 6 Vermont municipalities larger than Brattleboro and our neighbor in Keene, NH.

The Brattleboro Fire Department has been delivering first-response pre-hospital EMS care since 2000 to the people of Brattleboro. Last year, BFD responded to 1367 EMS calls for service, more than half of the total EMS calls in 2021. BFD staff provides medical care at the following training levels: Paramedic, Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT), and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Current staffing includes two (2) paramedics, six (6) Advanced EMTs, and eighteen (18) EMTs. Seven (7) members are currently in an AEMT class that will be completed in July. In addition, we will be hiring three new personnel with the intent that they are at an AEMT or paramedic level.

To help us transition from a private model to a joint Fire/EMS, the Town intends to contract with Vermont paramedic licensed Golden Cross Ambulance Services for one year. Golden Cross will house and staff two ambulances at the Central Fire Station. In addition to Golden Cross licensed professionals, these ambulances will have a BFD staff member onboard for each call.

During the one year of Golden Cross aiding BFD, we will look to purchase two ambulances, add staffing, and continue to train staff to become licensed paramedics and advanced emergency medical technicians.

The Brattleboro Fire Department continually strives to provide the highest level of care that the people of Brattleboro deserve and expect. This transition will be no different; the residents and visitors will be

delivered the best quality of care. As the Fire Departments' motto states, it is "Our Town, Our People, Our Responsibility."

BFD and Golden Cross will be hosting community forums to answer any questions you may have on the pending change in EMS services in Brattleboro. They will be on the following dates and times:

Monday, April 18th @ 6:00 pm at Central Fire Station

Saturday, April 23 @ 1:00 pm at Central Fire Station

Tuesday, April 26 @ 6:00 pm at Brooks Memorial Library

Ian Goodnow, Selectboard Chair: "The decision to move from contracting out EMS services to expanding the role of the Brattleboro Fire Department was not reached lightly. This decision is the result of deep reflection on the part of the Town Staff, the Town Managers' Office, and the Selectboard. As Chair, I will do everything I can to ensure that the Brattleboro Fire Department is given the resources and opportunities necessary to safely effect this transition. On behalf of the Selectboard, I thank Rescue, Inc. for their decades of hard work and commitment to the town of Brattleboro. "

Yoshi Manale, Town Manager: "After a careful internal analysis of the feasibility of the Fire Department taking on EMS, I felt that not only can BFD provide a high level of service after a year of transition, but it also makes financial sense. It is estimated that the Town will see a \$500,000 to \$700,000 net gain in revenue. We plan to propose that this additional revenue be invested in quality-of-life improvements for the people of Brattleboro."

Leonard Howard, Fire Chief: "In 1831, the Brattleboro Fire Department was chartered to protect the Brattleboro community from the effects of fire. Since that time, we have become an all-hazards department. Our services include fire suppression, fire prevention, hazardous materials, technical rescue, and EMS first response. As the fire chief, I feel that providing the EMS transport service is the best for our community and the continued growth of the Town of Brattleboro."