

REGION 3 – Capitol District, Southern NY

COLUMBIA COUNTY Board of Supervisors on 12/28/12 approved \$1.3 million in payments to 15 towns for the costs of their contracts with EMS agencies. The amounts are billed to the residents of most towns in the county on their county tax bills. Involved are Ancram, Austerlitz, Canaan, Chatham, Claverack, Clermont, Copake, Gallatin, Germantown, Ghent, Greenport, Hillsdale, Livingston, Stuyvesant and Taghkanic. According to county officials, the towns began going through the county to pay the costs to avoid going over the state's 2 percent property tax increase limit. Three towns, Kinderhook, New Lebanon and Stockport, pay for the services directly out of their budget through special district taxes. The \$1.31 million will be divided amongst the Chatham Rescue Squad, Community Rescue Squad in Copake, Greenport Rescue Squad, Northern Dutchess Paramedics and Valatie Volunteer Rescue Squad.

GREENPORT RESCUE SQUAD, Columbia County, closed its Philmont station when the lease ran out at the Main Street site in October 2012. Greenport took over coverage for the village when the Philmont Rescue Squad went out of business in 2010. According to a local news article, the town of Claverack had supported the organization with \$55,000 in municipal support in 2012, an increase over the \$35,000 paid to the organization in 2011 to supplement its expenses but Greenport was seeking, \$90,000 from the town to cover its losses on its operations in Philmont. The Philmont Rescue Squad had operated out of the local fire station at no cost but the Greenport Rescue Squad rented out property and built a \$10,000 garage. The rent alone was \$1,450 a month, plus utilities, bringing the total non-personnel costs to about \$30,000 just for the building. In addition, the estimated costs were more than \$300,000 in salary for the organization to staff a paramedic and EMT at the site for the entire year, 24 hours a day, not including benefits, insurance, equipment and fuel. Third party billing didn't cover the expenses of maintaining a station in Philmont. The Greenport Rescue Squad operates 8 ambulances and also covers Hudson, Greenport, Claverack and part of Hillsdale, said Merante..

CROTON EMS, Westchester County, has received management help from the village government through the appointment of the head of the Croton Department of Emergency Management as acting head of the ambulance service. The action follows the release of a Citizens Advisory Committee report, which according to local news, highlighted high volunteer turnover, increasing response times and heavy reliance on mutual aid from surrounding communities and recommended provision of additional oversight by appointing an acting department head that will report directly to the mayor. Croton EMS was spun off from the fire department in 2008 to enable billing of patients and their insurance. Annual call volume is about 650 with average response times of 7 to 11 minute for the 3 mile radius service area. Two paid EMTs supplement about 27 active volunteers. The same 12 members show up at to most calls but a smaller cadre of 5 volunteers respond to about 100 of the annual calls. An "open call system" is used meaning there is no schedule of volunteers on duty and all on the roster receive a page and those available respond. If there is no response within six minutes to a high priority call it is turned over to a mutual aid squad. A \$16,500 recruitment and retention stipend allocated by the village in 2011 was never spent. Current leadership of Croton EMS will be retained but their future role is unclear according to the new article. Interestingly, the new acting head when he was then serving a village liaison to the ambulance service in mid 2011 was quoted saying "This is not like we're providing service for New York City, we're providing service for our own families, and that's really important", however, the December 2012 average NYC 911 response time was 9 minutes and 22 seconds.

PLEASANTVILLE VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE CORPS, Westchester County, has taken delivery of a new ambulance from Life Line Emergency Vehicles. The vehicle is a Type I Superliner 167" module on a 2012 Ford F450 4 wheel drive chassis with a Kelderman Air Ride suspension. Pleasantville VAC operates three ambulances providing free BLS level ambulance service 24/7/365 to the communities of Pleasantville and Thornwood. Annual call volume is about 800 runs.

RENSSELAER VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE, Rensselaer County, suffered fire damage on 12/29/12 which apparently started in an electrical fixture in one of the sleeping areas near the garage bays.. Two ambulances were coated in heavy soot and have minor fire damage. EMS supplies and equipment, appliances, desks and walls were mostly ruined by fire, smoke and water. Both ambulances will need to have interiors replaced and while the building brick exterior is in good shape, the interior will have to be

guttled and rebuilt. In October 2012 the Common Council chose Mohawk Ambulance, a commercial provider, to be the city's primary EMS contract service but Rensselaer VAC has continued answering calls up to the time of the fire.

SLEEPY HOLLOW VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE CORPS, Westchester County, has started using a paid EMT to cover the 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM time slot seven days a week. The village is funding the EMT position at the rate of \$6,643 per month or approximately \$18.00 per hour. The move was necessary to ensure an ambulance could arrive in a timely fashion at the scene of an emergency without reliance on mutual aid coming from a neighboring community. The village owns the squad's two ambulances, other equipment and the recently refurbished HQ building. According to a local news article, "in September 2011, the Sleepy Hollow Board of Trustees terminated all members without public explanation and began the process of rebuilding the corps".

YONKERS FIRE DEPARTMENT, Westchester County, was to have ended its 20 year old CFR-D EMS First Responder program effective 1/1/13 per a decision by the city's mayor. However, the union representing firefighters went to court and obtained a restraining order barring discontinuance which maintains the status quo through 2/27/13. The city's plan to eliminate 2 of 11 fire companies is also on hold. EMS ambulance service in Yonkers is provided exclusively by Empress Ambulance, a family owned commercial service with 200 employees. Chevra Hatzalah VAC will also respond from NYC if called direct by a Yonkers resident