

We thank the committee for their work. We appreciate the spirit of volunteerism and community service. The Board of Selectmen asked for our feedback on this report. Most of these comments would have been made earlier had we had the opportunity to speak at many of the meetings. Each item we identified is numbered on the report and our response is listed here.

1. At the time of these meetings, Chief Giovannacci was providing direct care to his father at the end of his battle with pancreatic cancer. This severely limited the Chiefs ability to attend the meetings. Captain Collins-Brown attended every public meeting of this committee.
2. The report states that the Chief in his summary of his recommendations "made it clear that he believes that the Department needs twelve additional full time firefighters to allow the Department to meet national standards." This is incorrect. The Chief's summary does not mention the addition of full time firefighters, but does mention full time equivalents. He has stated that it is important that current call firefighters be offered the opportunity to be part of the process.
3. The report states the "some fire departments, including the TFD are full-time by day, but call by night and/or on weekends." This is incorrect. The Topsfield Fire Department is fulltime on weekend days.
4. The organization of the department on page 3 is incorrect. The Call Staff is comprised of 1 Captain, 1 Lieutenant and 1 Acting Lieutenant. To be clear "Call Out" is 24/7. The call back of personnel is necessary even when the station is manned for the safety of all.
5. Again this is false, the Chief's recommendations do not mention full time firefighters, but full time equivalents.
6. The map of the defibrillator locations in Topsfield includes privately owned units as well that the department is aware of. It is not exclusively "town facilities".
7. The levels of EMS care that staff are certified to is incorrect, in addition to the two full time paramedics, one full time intermediate, and two fulltime basic EMT's including the Chief, the call department actually has three firefighters that are certified paramedics. One call firefighter paramedic has chosen not to complete the process of credentialing through Lahey Health Systems. The call department also has an intermediate. There is a full time firefighter and a call firefighter who are currently through with their didactic part of paramedic school and are now in the clinical setting. We have another call firefighter who states that he has been accepted to paramedic school, but has deferred his admission. Lastly, we have one call firefighter/EMT who will be challenging the paramedic program as she is a Registered Nurse and that is allowed by the National Registry of EMT's with some additional training.

8. The report states that our system was created by the Service Zone Plan. This is incorrect. The Service Zone Plan was created by the stakeholders at the time to describe the current EMS system in Topsfield. Members of the Board of Selectmen, Police Department, Environmental Police, Masconomet Nursing Home, the Elementary Schools and the local physician offices that were in Topsfield participated and agreed on the plan based on the provision of EMS services at the time that it was written. Selectman Gandt made a motion at the December 7, 2009 BOS meeting to accept the Service Zone Plan and that motion passed unanimously.
9. The response statistics quoted by the report for members of the Topsfield Fire Department are incorrect. The committee included our Senior Tax Volunteer and our Administrative Assistant in statistics for responses under 1%. Both of these people appear on our report due to their access to entering data and issuing open burning permits. Neither of these people have a responsibility or ability to respond to emergencies.
10. These strategies for recruitment have not provided "fruitful gains." Thus our concern grows and this plea for help. We believe these activities have aided in the retention of staff.
11. Call firefighters are absolutely respected for their services. This is a team, and a paramilitary organization. At times it is necessary to do work to help the team, the mission, or the unusual circumstance. Anytime that a firefighter voices a need to leave a call before the formal end of the call, they are always let go and paid in full for their time. There has never been a formal complaint brought to the Chief regarding this issue.
12. The Topsfield Fire Department absolutely trains it's firefighters to operate the apparatus. This year alone, we brought in a MIIA Driver Trainer twice. We also received a grant last year which allowed those who wished to go through pump training, to be 1:1 with a pump simulator and an instructor. An invaluable training to say the least. Driver training is the number one category of training recorded by Topsfield Fire in our ISO survey. The point that the Chief was trying to make, is that the basic components of doing this job safely require so much training, that when it is offered Firefighters they feel that it takes too much time to complete
13. We have documented that since 1973 we have provided EMS and Fire Services there has been no transition to Fire/EMS, we have always provided both services to our community. See attached timeline of EMS in Topsfield.
14. Again, it was never mentioned that there was a need or desire to "dispense of the call department."
15. The use of the standards for 1710 are for fulltime departments. Comparison to 1720 would be a more appropriate comparison. By the admission of the committee, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the Fire Department based on response times. Response times do not take into account the training or experience of the

personnel, the equipment arriving and timing, or other resources needed to mitigate a problem.

16. The report states that the Commonwealth requires that a paramedic level ambulance must be staffed with two paramedics. This is incorrect. 105 CMR 170.305 states the ambulance must be staffed with a minimum of two EMTs, at least one of whom is certified at the Paramedic level, provided that the conditions set forth in 105 CMR 170.305(C)(2)(a) through (f) are met.

17. The committee states that they spoke to Topsfield Police and Beverly hospital regarding our transports. Neither Topsfield Police nor Beverly Hospital would have data regarding our number of transports by any means. A review of the transports by Topsfield Fire in calendar year 2015 demonstrate complete adherence to SOG #2013-01 which is attached. Of those transports:

1 was mutual aid to Lyons

1 was mutual aid to Ipswich

10 were patients who walked in to our fire station for treatment

7 were mutual aid to Middleton

1 was mutual aid to Beauport

4 transports were due to the fact that there were multiple patients needing multiple ambulances.

The rest were transports because NERA was either unavailable, did not have the level of care needed for the patient, were delayed, had a mechanical failure, or came upon another emergency and could not leave that scene safely. All of these responses fell under our SOG and were appropriate.

The staff at NERA have been a valuable part of the EMS system in Topsfield and their management of resources makes our system more efficient and allows better patient care.

18. The committee notes that the only difference in the situation at night now is that there is a poor turnout by call firefighters at night and that the inherent risks of an all night-time call department have always existed. We agree that there always has been a great risk of insufficient response by relying on a call fire department at night. We agree and have documented a decreased turnout of call firefighters at night. The reasons that they are not turning out has been documented by the Chief and supported by the committee's work. The fact is that fires are much more dangerous now, buildings are made of composite materials that burn faster and hotter. The contents of buildings are more dangerous as well. This makes the tactics and strategies of responding to incidents at all times more hazardous to all involved. It is even more critical that responding personnel have the correct equipment and skill set for the situation.

19. The proposal was not to add full time firefighters, but to add full time equivalents which would be made up from a variety of staffing patterns. The Chief was not

allowed to speak at the meetings when he was able to be present regarding his proposal. He would be able to provide detailed analysis. As noted on the agendas for each of the meetings, there was not opportunity for public comment.

20. The committee notes that there is a poor history of labor relations between the Chief and the call department and that it is unusual for call firefighters to be represented by a separate bargaining unit from the full-time firefighters. There is no evidence of poor labor relations. Chief Giovannacci supported call firefighters first attempts to unionize in 1991, and then again most recently. There have been no grievances filed by the call firefighters against the Chief and no firefighters have resigned their positions due to labor relations. The bylaws of the International Association of Firefighters which are what is accepted by the Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts and attached to this document, strictly prohibit membership of anyone that is not a Full Time employee performing firefighting, EMS or rescue. There is no way for call firefighters to be members of the bargaining unit that the full time firefighters belong to. To state that it is unusual for call firefighters to be represented by a separate bargaining unit is simply incorrect.
21. Both strategies mentioned by Chief Parow and Chief Rogers have been suggested many times by Chief Giovannacci, Local 3250 and the Topsfield Call Firefighter Association and were rejected by the Board of Selectmen.
22. The Chief's frustration regarding the lack of call firefighters to fill shifts or complete training as described in their contract is not about their unwillingness as stated in this report, but about the system which does not work. For all of the reasons stated previously, call firefighters are not able to fill shifts or complete training as needed. It is frustrating to have to revisit this issue over and over again. No one has suggested eliminate dependence on an active call force. We continue to very aggressively recruit call firefighters, but the pool of qualified applicants is very limited.
23. To suggest that there is a misallocation of resources toward EMS is incorrect. Attached is the timeline of development of EMS in Topsfield. We were initially tasked the job of providing EMS. We have developed as the need in our community has developed. We have taken science and regulations and implemented them to meet the needs of our residents and visitors.
24. The reports states it is apparent that the Chief and full-time officers in the Topsfield Fire Department, would like for TFD to be the primary EMS service in Topsfield. The fact is that Topsfield Fire is the primary EMS service in Topsfield, we have been since 1973. As documented in the timeline of EMS in Topsfield and many many town reports, we have sought to provide the highest level of care to our "customers" in all aspects of our service. We have complied with all Commonwealth of Mass Regulations in this process.
25. The report states that the request for the 2005 Annual Town Meeting was for 8 FTE's and the purchase of two ambulances. That is incorrect. The warrant articles are attached. One was for two ambulances and one was for four full-time firefighters.

26. The allegation in the report that we have expanded our "agenda" to decrease utilization of NERA has no factual basis. See documentation of transports in Topsfield ambulances.
27. The committee states TFD Command personnel often cancel NERA's response and opt to transport. The committee recommends transport by NERA except when they are unable to respond in a timely manner. That is exactly what our current practice is.
28. Housing a private ambulance in town will not happen without a lot of planning, preparing and money. We as tax payers do not believe that subsidizing a for-profit vendor's business is appropriate. Again the report suggests that Topsfield Fire has expanded their services to providing EMS. Simply, we have always provided emergency medical services. The requests for these services are increasing annually.
29. The committee states that the Chief's suggested plan is to expand to 18 full time firefighters in five years is not indicated or sustainable. That statement is inaccurate as the Chief's plan does not mention full time firefighters.
30. NERA states they have never offered to station an ambulance in Topsfield Fire Headquarters. Email is attached. Currently two Topsfield Fire Trucks are stationed outside year round. There is not room for any more vehicles. Furthermore, we believe that it would be irresponsible to use tax payer's money to fund a private for profit vendor's business by providing, space, utilities etc.
31. The section regarding modifying the current call firefighter response model mentions volunteer firefighters six separate times. There are no volunteer firefighters in Topsfield. There are full time and there are call firefighters. The suggestions in this section have been presented to the Board of Selectmen in budgeting and union negotiations by Chief Giovannacci, Local 3250 and the Topsfield Call Firefighters Association on many different occasions and were rejected by the Board of Selectmen.
32. In the section regarding modifying training programs, the committee suggests bringing the entire group up to qualification to drive all apparatus. Training is welcome all the time, the Department has an open door policy. Whenever training needs to be rescheduled due to a person's absence from regular training, it is always done. Some training sessions that require group work are more difficult to reschedule, but it is done. We disagree that all members should be made to drive all apparatus. Some people are just not comfortable driving and operating such large apparatus. We believe that if a member is simply not comfortable with the truck, it is in the best interest in the safety of all to not force the issue. Training by other recognized, qualified agencies is recommended for consideration by the report. This training is already encouraged by this Department. Several members are employed by such agencies.
33. The Town of Topsfield hired a consultant to update all job descriptions. We are waiting for the final versions. The Chief has never received any complaints of favoritism over qualifications as suggested by the report. Members should be aware

that the non civil service police and firefighters are subject to MGL 41 section 99A and must live within 15 miles of the community they serve.

34. We feel the management of the Fire Department should remain with the subject matter experts and the elected officials with the oversight of the town administrator.

The Evolution of EMS services in the Town of Topsfield

In 1973 the Department of Transportation developed regulations that stated all medical care must be provided in an ambulance. This disallowed the practice at the time of transporting patients in police cruisers. In 1973, members of Topsfield Fire Department attended the first EMT course run by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and held at the Hunt Hospital. This was in preparation of providing emergency medical care to the citizens of Topsfield.

After completion of the training, in 1975 the Selectmen assigned the Topsfield Fire all responsibilities for patient care.

In 1980, several members of the Topsfield Fire Department completed EMT IV training in the first advanced EMT class ever held in the Commonwealth at the Hunt Memorial Hospital.

The Commonwealth added legislation which required communities to designate one vehicle as an EMS Truck. In 1981, the Town of Topsfield purchased a 1981 Pierce for the expressed "purpose of providing efficient responses to medical emergencies." This is direct wording from the town report.

In 1998, the Commonwealth implemented the first ever Statewide Treatment Protocols which all staff were required to be trained in.

In October 1999, the Town of Topsfield received their ambulance license. The license was necessary to designate a vehicle to be licensed to carry aspirin to be used in the presence of nontraumatic chest pain, glucometry to be used in patients with altered mental status and to carry epi pens for patients with allergic reactions. We requested a BLS non transporting license. Upon site inspection by the Department of Public Health, we were issued a BLS transporting license as the inspector felt with our equipment and training, our community would be better served.

As early as 2000, in the Annual Town Report of the Topsfield Fire Department, a shift in the acuity of patients was noted. This was due to the increase in Senior Housing, Sporting venues and the changes in health care which noted decreased lengths of stay.

In the 2001-2002 Annual Report of the Topsfield Board of Selectmen, the Selectmen listed evaluation of the town Emergency Medical Service Delivery as a priority.

The Board of Selectmen appointed an Emergency Medical Service Delivery Committee in 2001 to evaluate and make recommendations. The committee met regularly for two years and assessed the process, staffing, workload and statistics related to EMS compared to national guidelines.

In 2001, two members of the Topsfield Fire Department graduated from and were certified as paramedics in the Commonwealth of MA. Their tuition was paid for through the Approved budget process and from donations from local businesses and health care facilities.

In 2002, the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen voted to approve the Fire Department budget which had increased money in the budget specifically for increased training of EMT's to EMT Paramedics. This was passed at the Annual Town Meeting.

On May 7, 2002 The Finance Committee recommended in Article 27 that the town vote and assess \$24, 676 expended by the BOS and with the advice of the Fire Chief to purchase a biphasic defibrillator cardiac monitor. This was a required piece of equipment for an ALS service. That Article was amended on the Town Meeting Floor to vote to assess \$14,676 by the Town of Topsfield as the Topsfield Firefighters Relief donated 10,000 towards that purchase. The amendment passed unanimously. As did the revised motion.

In August of 2002 the Town of Topsfield received their Paramedic License from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and on October 5, 2002, implemented full Advanced Life Service care to our residents. Incidentally, exactly one week after receipt of this license, the Topsfield Fire Department with the help of the Topsfield Police Department and Lyons Ambulance successfully resuscitated a male resident victim of cardiac arrest.

In January of 2003, The Emergency Medical Services Committee presented their findings and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Each member of the

committee voted that changes needed to be made to the current system to ensure adequate response. They offered suggestions on changes to be made.

Based upon the EMSD Committee's recommendations, an article was written and placed on the Town Meeting Warrant to recommend changing staffing of the Topsfield Fire Department to add 8 FTE's and to purchase two ambulances. This would staff the fire department 24 hours per day 365 days per year. This recommendation was presented at the 5/3/2005 ATM and was defeated.

Also at the 2005 ATM, The Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen recommended an increase in Article 3 for FY 06 budget to add one full time firefighter and additional coverage to staff the fire station and supported a budget increase of \$80,000 for the Fire Department to staff the station with two firefighters twelve hours per day, seven days per week. This Article passed.

With the defeat of the EMSD committee's recommendations, the Fire Chief asked permission from the Board of Selectmen on April 10, 2006, to investigate the purchase of the Town of Middleton's Ambulance as there was no back up to our EMS vehicle. The BOS gave the Chief permission to investigate that purchase.

On August 14, 2006, the Topsfield Firefighters Relief Association purchased the Wheeled Coach Ambulance from the Town of Middleton and donated it to the Town of Topsfield. The donation was accepted by the Board of Selectmen.

Legislation was developed which required each community to develop their own Service Zone Plan which described the provision of Emergency Medical Services within their community. All stake holders in the Town of Topsfield were invited to participate and after some revisions, the Town of Topsfield Service Zone Plan was signed and approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Health on January 12, 2009.

Selectman Gandt made a motion to approve the Service Zone Plan at the December 7, 2009 meeting. The plan was approved unanimously. Selectmen Clark and Morrison were involved in this process with final signoff from Martha Morrison Chair of the Board of Selectmen. This Commonwealth Approved Plan lists Topsfield Fire Department as the Designated Primary Ambulance Service for the Town of Topsfield with all responsibility of monitoring and reporting of the EMS system in Topsfield.

In June 2009, the Town of Topsfield's contract with Lyons Ambulance was up for renewal. The Town had never gone out to bid for service, but only renewed the Lyons Contract. The Board of Selectmen decided to open a bid process, the Town of Topsfield received bids for ambulance services. Twelve ambulance companies were offered the opportunity to submit bids. Four ambulance companies submitted a total of six proposals. Each proposal was reviewed independently by a group of subject matter experts. The contract was awarded by the Board of Selectmen, to Northeast Regional Ambulance as their proposal was the most responsive to the Town's request for proposals. This competitive bid process allowed the town to save over \$50,000 per year which they were paying for ambulance services.

In the 2014 Annual Town Meeting the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen recommended and supported an article to purchase a Fire Rescue Vehicle to replace the current Rescue One. The article passed with little to no discussion.

The past few versions of the Fire Chief Job Description list under essential job functions, the responsibility of the Chief to ensure effective and efficient provision of emergency and nonemergency fire services including emergency medical services. Another essential job function includes overseeing all medical training of firefighters, adherence to state protocols and to oversee the collection of fees for ambulance use.

Today the Topsfield Fire Department remains the designated primary ambulance service for the Town of Topsfield responsible for the care and treatment of our

residents and visitors and responsible for monitoring compliance of the contract with the private vendor.

Topsfield Fire Department
SOG # 13-01

Scope: In order to comply with 105 CMR 170.355 to dispatch the closest appropriate ambulance and to treat patients without delay,

A Topsfield Ambulance should be utilized to assess and treat and transport all patients who walk in to Topsfield Fire Headquarters

A Topsfield Ambulance should be utilized first when NERA notifies TFD that they do not have an ambulance available for a response or an ambulance available at the appropriate level of care needed for the patient

A Topsfield Ambulance should be utilized first when NERA notifies TFD that they will have a delayed response

Ambulance 2 should be utilized with Ambulance 1 when an incident is dispatched with reports of multiple injured patients

Revised November 25, 2015

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General Secretary-Treasurer's Office

How to Join the IAFF

Any person of good moral character who at the time of making application is engaged in service within the jurisdiction of the association, including all full-time, paid employees engaged in fire fighting, emergency medical or rescue service activities, will be eligible for active membership in the association through its chartered locals, state or provincial associations, and joint councils. The Association may allow other categories of employees as required by applicable state, provincial or U.S. or Canadian federal laws, subject to appropriate documentation and the approval of the General President.

Local unions organized as local affiliates of the IAFF shall pay the General Secretary Treasurer one hundred fifty dollars (\$150) for their charter, books and seal. Additionally, a ten-dollar initiation fee must be paid for each member. Finally, a per capita tax must be paid by an organized local to the International each month for each member.

Three or more persons in the same jurisdiction (usually a city, town or county) who are qualified for active membership in the IAFF as discussed above may submit a proposal to charter a local union. Charters will not be granted to applicants in any jurisdiction where a chartered local union in good standing of the IAFF already exists, unless that chartered local consents to the granting of an additional charter.

For further information: email join@IAFF.org (<mailto:join@IAFF.org>).

Programs & Services

(<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#page=ProgramsAndServices>)

FIREPAC (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#contentid=595>)

How to Become a Fire Fighter (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#menuid=29>)

Fire Ops 101 (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#page=fireops101>)

Fire Ground Survival (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#menuid=31>)

Fit to Survive (<http://www.iaff.org/hs/FTS/ftsdefault.asp>)

HazMat/WMD Training (<http://www.iaff.org/et/HW/index.htm?src=web>)

IAFF Financial Corporation (<http://www.iaff-fc.com/bt/>)

Job Center (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#contentid=442>)

IAFF Media Awards Contest (<http://www.iaff.org/mediaawards>)

Wellness-Fitness Initiative (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#menuid=1164>)

Kaplan University (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#menuid=34>)

Burn Prevention (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#menuid=27>)

IAFF-MDA (<http://client.prod.iaff.org/#menuid=36>)

QUESTION FOUR: Shall the Town of Topsfield be allowed to assess an additional \$108,589 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of a 24 hour, seven (7) days per week operational staff expansion of the Fire Department by hiring four (4) additional full time fire fighters for the fiscal year beginning July first two thousand and five?

Yes..... 299
 No 956
 Blanks 32

Question Four failed.

QUESTION FIVE: Shall the Town of Topsfield be allowed to assess an additional \$170,816 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding the purchasing and equipping of two vehicles to be used as ambulances for the fiscal year beginning July first two thousand and five?

Yes 217
 No..... 1026
 Blanks 44

Question Five failed.

QUESTION SIX: Shall the Town of Topsfield accept sections 3 to 7 inclusive, of Chapter 44B of the General Laws, as approved by its legislative body, a summary of which appears below?

Sections 3 to 7 of Chapter 44B of the General Laws of Massachusetts, also known as the Community Preservation Act ("Act"), establishes a dedicated funding source to acquire, create and preserve open space, land for recreational use, and community housing, to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate and restore historic resources, and to rehabilitate and restore such open space, land for recreational use and community housing acquired or created as provided under said Act. In Topsfield, the Act will be funded by an additional surcharge of three percent on the annual tax levy on real property and by matching funds provided by the state. The following exemption(s) from such surcharge, permitted under Section 3(e) of said Act, will apply: (1) property owned and occupied as a domicile by a person who would qualify for low income housing or low or moderate income senior housing in the town; and (2) \$100,000 of the value of each

table parcel of residential real property. The surcharge to be paid by a taxpayer receiving an abatement of real property authorized by Chapter 59 or any other law will be reduced in proportion to such abatement. A Community Preservation Committee must be created pursuant to Bylaw and will make recommendations on the use of the funds. Town Meeting must approve any such recommendation before funds can be expended to acquire any particular parcel of land. All expenditures pursuant to the Act will be subject to an annual audit.

Yes..... 410
 No 788
 Blanks 89

Question Six failed.

QUESTION SEVEN: This Question is Not Binding.

"Shall the Town vote to petition the General Court to enact special legislation as set forth in Article Second of the March 1, 2005 Special Town Meeting authorizing the expansion of the Board of Selectmen from three to five members?"

Yes..... 692
 No..... 536
 Blanks 59

Question Seven passed. The vote, however, is not binding.

QUESTION EIGHT: This Question is Not Binding.

"Shall the Town vote to petition the General Court to enact special legislation as set forth in Article Fifth of the March 1, 2005 Special Town Meeting authorizing the establishment of a Department of Public Works?"

Yes..... 627
 No 575
 Blanks 85

Question Eight passed. The vote, however, is not binding.

Chief Giovannacci

From: Brian Caponigro [bcap@nerambulance.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 8:57 AM
To: Chief Giovannacci
Subject: RE: for your review

Good Morning Chief,

After speaking with you yesterday I wanted to be certain I was clear. Northeast Regional Ambulance did NOT offer to provide an Advanced Life Support Unit housed at the Fire Station at any time. I was asked if it would be a possibility if the Town requested, and I did state that I could be agreeable to this. Again I did not offer this to the Town.

As always I am happy to speak to anyone who may have questions.

Regards,
Brian

Brian P. Caponigro
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From: Chief Giovannacci [mailto:ron.giovannacci@verizon.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2016 3:52 PM
To: Brian Caponigro
Subject: for your review

SELECTMAN WORK WITH FIRE CHIEF TO PROVIDE SPACE TO HOUSE PRIVATE AMBULANCE AT FIRE HEADQUARTERS
Northeast Ambulance has offered on a number of occasions to house an Advanced Life Support ambulance in the TFD station on a 24/7 basis. The ambulance would not be dedicated solely to Topsfield but would provide immediate local response in a large number of calls. If it is on a call Northeast may stage another ambulance to cover Topsfield. This result will help keep TFD personnel in town to perform their primary duties. Accommodations may need to be made to move an underutilized fire vehicle to a secondary location to accomplish this. Private Ambulance personnel will need access

Town of Topsfield 24/7 Fire Study Committee Report 15-Jan-2016

Chief Ronald P. Giovannacci