

Rescue Committee Report

Town of Windham, Vermont

NOV 2019

Members of Rescue Committee:

Dawn Boyer
David Cherry (Chairperson)
JoJo Chlebogiannis
Leila Erhardt
Ernie Friedli
Sally Hoover
Claudia Voight (Secretary)
Eileen Widger

Mission:

At the request of members of the select board the committee was formed to:

- Assess options to improve the current emergency rescue services available to the Town of Windham
- Evaluate services offered by Rescue Inc. (www.rescueinc.org)
- Evaluate services offered by Londonderry Voluntary Rescue Squad (LVRS) (londonderryrescuevt.org)
- Compare current rescue services and alternative options

Methods:

- Invite representatives from Rescues Inc. and LVRS to answer questions at a committee meeting
- Visit the facilities of each rescue organization
- Collect data:
 - Organization history
 - Cost
 - Average response time
 - Qualifications and number of personnel responding
 - Equipment available to respond
 - Back-up if equipment and /or personnel not available
 - Coverage area
 - Triage process
 - Time to transport to medical facility
 - Hospital selection process
 - Sign-up and transport fees
 - Town coverage complete/partial/geographic
 - Outcome data
 - Rescue Inc. experience in neighboring towns

Results

Organization History

Londonderry Rescue (LVRS) was incorporated in 1963. It is located in one facility in Londonderry, VT. It services 7 towns (Londonderry, Landgrove, Weston, Peru, Winhall, Windham and Stratton). It is a completely volunteer staffed organization that does not charge for services. It is the only fully volunteer squad in Vermont that provides free patient care and emergency transport. It offers courses for BLS, ALS and First Responders. LVRS responds to approximately 500 calls a year including 20 a year in the Town of Windham. For further history see: <https://londonderryrescuevt.org>.

Rescue Inc. formed in 1996 as a non-profit in Brattleboro to service towns that could not form their own EMS ambulance/rescue service. In 2005 Rescue Inc. expanded with a station at Grace Cottage Hospital and provided ambulance service to that organization. It serves the 13 towns in Vermont District 13 and 2 in New Hampshire (Brattleboro, Vernon, Guilford, Putney, Dummerston, Marlboro, Newfane, Brookline, Townshend, Wardsboro, Jamaica, Williamsville, Hindsdale and Chesterfield). In 2017 Rescue Inc. built a new station in West Townshend and moved out of the Grace Cottage facility. It is financed 80% by direct billing to clients and 20% by grants. Those who cannot afford this service may apply for partial or full bill assistance. Rescue Inc. responds to approximately 5,000 calls a year. It currently does not service the Town of Windham. For further history see: <https://www.rescueinc.org>.

Cost

LVRS is paid \$1,500 annually and the dispatch of the rescue/ambulance service is included in the \$10,500 paid by the town for the Fire Department dispatch. All emergency services are free to the client. Annual fundraising funds the organization completely.

Rescue Inc. bills the town approximately \$28.63 per household coverage and then bills each client for its transport services. An annual subscription plan (\$60 if insured; \$120 if no insurance) is available to clients that covers the entire household for non transport treatment, 3 emergency transports, 3 non-emergent transports a year and one long distance (75 mile) transport a year. (See: Rescue Inc. Subscription Plan (<https://www.rescueinc.org/subscription-plans.html>)). This means that the total cost is \$88 to \$148 per year per household for town fee and a subscription plan to supply equivalent coverage as LVRS. The intent of the subscription program is to prevent a subscriber from incurring an additional out of pocket expense for services rendered.

The town of Townshend cost is \$34,000/year based on number of households covered.

Response times:

Data on response was obtained from the central regional rescue dispatch that covers Windham. It represents calls covered by Londonderry Rescue. Average response time for Londonderry Rescue to North Windham is 20 minutes and to Southern Windham 30 minutes. This is based on analysis of an average of 20 calls a year to Windham over the last 10 years. Londonderry rescue has approximately 500 calls a year to a service area of 255 square miles and 8 towns. The station is 8.8 miles and 13 minutes away from the Windham Town Hall.

Time to team formed:	4 min 0 sec	Range (1 TO 9 min) (note this is not time of dispatch from LVRS)
Time to on scene:	22 min 12 sec	(range 12 to 35min)
Time on scene:	18 min 12 sec	(range 6 to 54 min)

There is no data for Rescue Inc. as the organization has never covered enough primary calls in Windham to have meaningful data. Rescue Inc. has personnel at the station located in West Townshend continuously (24/7) and the response is within 2 minutes after a call request is received. The Rescue Inc. station in West Townshend is 6.3 miles and 11 minutes from Windham Town Hall. If the West Townshend Rescue Inc. ambulance is already on a call a backup crew and equipment are moved up from Brattleboro to Newbrook Fire Station in Newfane. The Newbrook station is 15 miles and 22 minutes from Windham Town Hall. Data from adjacent towns served by Rescue Inc. is not available to evaluate. Rick Weitzel was asked about Rescue Inc. and response times and reported they were prompt and well trained professionals.

Qualifications and personnel

LVRS has 45 members. There are Ambulance Divers with CPR (11), emergency medical responders (9), EMTs (9), Advanced EMTs (11), Paramedics (5). Each truck has a minimum of one Advanced EMT when responding to a call.

Rescue Inc. providers are EMTs (17), Advanced EMTs (23), Paramedics (22) and Critical Care Paramedics (9). There are a total of 75 staff members of which 28 are fulltime career staff and the remainder are volunteers. Each truck has a minimum of one Advanced EMT when responding to a call. A paramedic is always on call. Two ambulances in Brattleboro and one ambulance in West Townshend are staffed 24/7 with a 2 minute response time.

Equipment

LVRs has two advanced life support ambulances and a heavy duty rescue truck, operated by Londonderry Technical Rescue (a division of LVRs), which is equipped with vehicle extrication tools and mountain rescue equipment and a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) trailer that has supplies for large emergencies.

Rescue Inc. has 9 ambulances, 6 paramedic rescue vehicles (one Advanced EMT vehicle), 2 rescue boats, 1 Mass Casualty trailer, and 1 technical Rescue trailer. Two ambulances are stationed in West Townshend fulltime and a boat, technical rescue gear, thermal imaging drone, and Jaws of Life for vehicle extraction. If both ambulances are out on calls, backup equipment and personnel is brought from Brattleboro to Newbrook Fire and Rescue in Newfane.

Coverage Area

Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad services 8 towns (Londonderry, South Londonderry, Landgrove, Weston, Peru, Winhall, Windham and Stratton) encompassing 255 square miles.

Rescue Inc. covers 13 towns in Vermont District 13 and 2 in New Hampshire (Brattleboro, Vernon, Guilford, Putney, Dummerston, Marlboro, Newfane, Brookline, Townshend, Wardsboro, Jamaica, Williamsville, Hindsdale and Chesterfield) encompassing 500 square miles. Rescue Inc. is willing to cover part of the Town of Windham.

Triage process and transport

Both LVRs and Rescue Inc. transport patients with urgent medical needs to the closest facility able to address their medical problem as per protocol guidelines for the State of Vermont.

LVRs whenever possible offers patients a choice of transport to Springfield Hospital, Rutland Regional Medical Center, Southern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington, Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend, or Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. LVRs does not transport to Dartmouth. The DHART helicopter service is available to transport serious trauma and medical patients when weather conditions allow. LVRs has no Critical Care Paramedics who may be necessary for inter-institution transport for patients with critical conditions.

Rescue Inc. for subscribed members offers 3 emergency transports, 3 non-emergent transports a year and one long distance (75 mile) transport a year. Rescue Inc. has 6 Critical Care Paramedics. As per VT State protocol emergent calls are taken to the closest facility that can address medical needs of the client. If there is no subscription

plan the client is billed and pays for transportation cost. Unpaid bills are transferred to collections. Neighborhood towns have been satisfied with the response and service of Rescue Inc..

Outcome data

There is no outcome data available for either LVRS nor Rescue Inc.. National data shows the need to intervene during cardiac arrest in 4 to 6 minutes. Survival after cardiac arrest is reduced 7 to 10% every minute without defibrillation and Advanced Life Support. Very few interventions succeed after 10 minutes of cardiac arrest. Response times for rural areas are above national averages in rural states.

NFPA 1710 goals for cardiac arrest strives for turn around dispatch in less than a minute and four minutes or less for arrival of first responders. First responders need to be trained how to use and be equipped with AED devices.

Summary

Definitive conclusions regarding the best option for the emergency ambulance service is impossible to make with the available data. Nevertheless the following statements are likely valid. LVRS is a dedicated well-trained voluntary service, which is cost effective. The equipment is adequate to address the needs of Windham. Ongoing education and training programs keep the squad members up to date. Rescue Inc. has full time staff and possibly quicker response times although objective data is lacking to support this. Rescue Inc. has a more robust staff of than LVRS some of who have higher levels of training.

Rescue Inc. maintains a very high level of training/certification of their staff. Equipment is adequate for local care and staff and equipment allow critical care level care in transport to tertiary medical facilities. Services provided by Rescue Inc. cost more and may leave the uninsured with substantial bills and/or debt. Rescue Inc. offers a reasonable subscription insurance plan to avoid most of the costs.

Ambulance and Acute Life Support response times are typical of other rural areas in the United States. This reflects availability of staff and topography and demographics. Vermont response times (22 min 56.4 sec) are the second worst in the United States. High density populated areas are the best with response times averaging 6 to 7 minutes. It is likely the town of Windham can improve if more resident first responders with AED equipment were available.