

**Genoa Comprehensive Planning Group Notes**  
**Monday 9 November 2009**

Present: John Berry, Peggy Bradley, Doug LeFave, Anto Parseghian, Doug Radcliffe, Charlotte Reeves, Kezia Sullivan, Dan Thayer, Susan Tosto, Karin Wikoff.

1. **Approval of Minutes for October meeting:** Tabled until December meeting to give the most time possible to our guests from the Fire Department.

2. **Doug LeFave, Genoa Fire Department:** Doug LeFave gave us a report on the Genoa Fire Department, including their concerns for now and in the future.

Equipment: The Genoa Fire Department has 4 vehicles:

Genoa Engine Number One (First due on all fires): 1995, Class A pumper, 1,000 gallons of water, 1,500 GPM, on board foam system A and B, 7 AP 75 4.5 Scott Air packs w/spare bottles, Thermal image camera.

Genoa Engine Number Two (First due on any motor vehicle crash, farm accidents, industrial accidents; Second out for any fire): 2002, 500 gallons of water, 1,250 GPM, rescue jacks, junk yard dog struts, complete set of Holmatro core extrication tools Cutter, 2 rams, spreader, pump, air bags 32 ton, 22 ton, 12 ton & 5 ton (2 each), AP 75 4.5 Scott Air packs W/ spare bottles, 4 gas detection meter.

Genoa Tanker One (Third due on all fires): 2007, 2,300 gallons of water, 500 GPM, 3 portable pumps, 2500 gallon portable pond.

Genoa Rescue One (First due on all EMS calls; Second due on all accidents): 2000 Chevy Suburban, Complete set of Basic EMS equipment.

All equipment gets regular servicing and testing.

Physical Building: The building has been well kept, but the fire department is outgrowing it. One particular issue is the location – because of having parking for dwellings across the street, it is very difficult to get the larger trucks in and out of the garage.

Personnel: Genoa Fire Department has 40 all-volunteer members on their roster, 18-19 of whom are certified interior firemen. They have several new young members, but also 10-15 members who will be retiring in the next 10 years. There are 5 Commissioner who are elected to 5 year terms, a Fire Chief, who is elected by the firemen for a 1 year term, a District Treasurer, also elected, and 9 EMTs. There are generally 5 guys on a truck.

Call volume : Call volume is increasing. Genoa has already had 150+ calls this year. 80% of their calls are EMS calls, including motor vehicle accidents, plus many calls to other districts. Genoa is first alarm on Moravia. The high call rate to other districts like Moravia, Scipio and Aurora is due to the special equipment and ample personnel in Genoa. In addition to Mutual Aid (calls to other communities), other reasons for the increasing call volume include scope (meth labs) and traffic calls. Our local propane facilities are both very well cared for and follow regulations well, as is Genoa Grain. The average response time is 4 minutes.

RIT – Rapid Intervention Teams – are dwindling; people burn out and disappear.

Dave feels the Genoa Fire Department has been successful because they have a tradition of service, a lot of training, attract younger members and new people and because they have been lucky.

Money: The fire department handles its own budget which is not part of the Town Budget. The current year's budget is \$118,000. Genoa has recently received a \$100,000 grant, which, together with \$4,000 in local contributions, will replace 16 air packs. (Note King Ferry's entire budget for a year is \$100,000). It costs \$2,500 for the turn-out gear per person, though they might be able to get a discount for multiple purchases. They try to buy 3 new sets of gear each year, though sometimes they get like-new second hand stuff from Lansing. Genoa has had over \$160,000 in grants over the past few years.

Future:

--Merger: Have to think about joining more closely with King Ferry, especially since they have only 2 interior firemen, which means that they can't legally or safely go into a burning building. One possibility is that they could become one district with 2 companies. The two districts have talked about a merger, but not formally. Some issues involved include money, regulations and insurance.

--Water System: Would like to see hydrants all the way down Route 90 about 500 ft apart, and even further in the future.

--Recruitment: Would like to do presentations at the school, have an open house, do a demo.

Concerns: There are some scary situations out there with regards to code violations. Partly it is the economy and how it affects how people heat their homes. We've always had some of that and always will, but there is an increase in risk at this time.

Communication:

-- Relations with ambulance service and police are good.

--Website: <http://www.genoafiredepartment.com/> The website is used for communication with members, officer bios, info on equipment, a calendar of activities, and for informing the community. On 14 October, the new burning rules went into effect, with some few exemptions for agriculture – a good idea would be to post the details on the fire department website, as many people are either not aware the law has gone into effect, or are unaware of just what the new rules are.

--Communication system is in a serious situation. Fire and emergency services are all on the same system (police are separate), but the radio towers, most from the 1940s and 50s, often go down, especially the one at Frozen Ocean. When this happens, the signal for a call can't come out to the department. When it is a known problem, the fire department has to have a member

sitting by the phone in case a call comes in because the southern end of the county can't get the 911 signals. Then the call has to go out to members. The fire folks can be paged, but the ambulance folks can't. The previous estimate to fix this known problem for all of Southern Cayuga was \$22 Million and they had one bid (from Motorola). Nothing has been done for so long that now it will cost more. If there is a lawsuit from a wrongful death, it will cost a whole lot more. We really need to correct the deficiencies in communication for emergency services so our citizens can be safe.

### **3. Kezia Sullivan, Southern Cayuga Ambulance Service**

**Equipment:** Southern Cayuga has one ALS (Advanced Life Support) certified ambulance, plus equipment and trained personnel. Some of the equipment includes a defibrillator, external pacemaker, carbon dioxide, IVs and more. With medications and procedures, the ambulance service and provide almost all Emergency Room services in the field. The station is located at Poplar Ridge.

**Call volume:** They get about 300 calls a year, more than half of which are ALS-level calls. They get about 20 calls a year when the first ambulance is out, which isn't enough to justify a second vehicle. If a second call comes in, they turn to Mutual Aid for the next station available – whichever is closest and available. A few years ago, the service was unable to respond to nearly half the calls; last year they only were unable to respond to 2-3 calls, so their rate has improved to more than 95%.

**Personnel:** Their EMTs have 3 levels of training: basic, intermediate and critical care EMTs, as well as paramedic EMTs. They have 15 people, which is a small number, and they have service to Venice, Genoa, Scipio and half of Ledyard (the Village of Aurora has their own ambulance service). Of the 15, 5 are EMTs and 2 more are in training classes. It's a two year program for certification. The rest are drivers.

**Organization:** The ambulance squad was originally part of the Poplar Ridge Fire Department, but around 2000 they became a separately-funded, independent, not-for-profit organization. This means they can now bill for their calls. They used to be all volunteers, but a couple years ago they added 4 paid staff, which is now a common arrangement for the size of their service. They have 3 categories – volunteer staff, paid staff and volunteer staff who are paid to be on call part-time from homes close to the station. A lot of their time is covered with volunteers and more are needed. In the future, it may be necessary to use all paid staff.

Kezia has resigned as Director of Southern Cayuga Ambulance Service, but her husband, Patrick Sullivan, is now the Director. She will remain on the team and go out on calls, but will be taking a break from administration. The service used to have a Board of Officers, but now has a Board of Directors, which is separate from the Officers and includes a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer plus 2-4 members-at-large. One can be on the Board of Directors without being a responder. The Board now includes some community members, and the service is looking for more people to be on the Board, as other skills are welcome. "It's like running your own business that never closes."

Money: The ambulance service contracts with the 4 towns which provide a budget of \$40,000. This budget, along with the billing for calls, pays the staff. The amount each town pays is based half on how many calls they had the previous year and half on the size of their population. Genoa contributes about \$13,000, as they have the most population and the most calls. For the most part, the call bills are paid because they are able to bill insurance companies.

There used to be an Ambulance Guard program, where subscribers (\$35/\$45 annually) to the service were covered with no additional fee. This program provided a good regular income of about \$10,000 a year, but the Attorney General's Office sent a letter last March saying this kind of subscription service might not be allowed. Southern Cayuga has temporarily discontinued their service until the AG's Office decides. For now, they are doing OK financially, but it did hurt to lose that program.

Southern Cayuga has done well with grants, most recently \$20,000 for a new cardiac monitor.

Future/Concerns:

--Misc: Could a tax be used to help fund the ambulance service? We could not have a joint ambulance district. It would be feasible to pay for full-time coverage – you can do it with 2 people. Fire crews are larger, so not really feasible.

--Merger: The future might include a merger with Four Town Ambulance Service, based out of Moravia, but they are not currently open to the idea. They have three times as many calls and three times more income, getting more money from their town contracts. Both services started in 1968. If the two joined, they would be providing service to 8 communities; they could have more employees and even offer health insurance.

--Senior Housing: If senior housing in Genoa became a reality, it would increase the number of calls, and would be welcome

--Like the fire department, the ambulance service has concerns about code issues and is hoping the new code officer will be more aggressive in enforcement.

--Communication – would like to have a website and a newsletter. The service has very good relations with Sheriff Gould. Communication is more open and cooperative. It helps to have Sheriff substations in Aurora and Moravia.

--Summary for future: In five years, all staff may be paid, or we may have volunteer only as drivers. We may have a merger, or more calls or enormous community support. We need to have community members on our Board. We have to put the sandbox rivalry behind us and coordinate sharing. We need to be more efficient and more effective.

**10. Next Meeting:** Monday 14 December 2009 -- 7:00 PM Genoa Town Hall, unless otherwise notified. We hope to have Judy Wright, and we should talk to Geoff Milz about what issues we should have her cover. Some ideas include American Farmland Trust, PDR, development rights, ag in general, having towns or counties sponsor development rights, such as presented in Brutus and Ledyard, Ag & Markets, something that has been tried in Fleming, Aurelius and Scipio. (My notes are a little sketchy here).

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Wikoff

Secretary, Town of Genoa Comprehensive Planning Committee