

March 18, 2012

James Collins  
PO Box 323  
Hopkinton, MA  
01748

Board of Selectmen  
PO Box 38  
Canaan, NH  
03741

Dear Board of Selectmen,

My name is James "Don" Collins, and I am an assistant fire chief/shift commander for Massport Fire-Rescue, at Boston-Logan International Airport. I am also an EMT-Paramedic with 28 years of experience in fire and EMS.

On the morning of March 8, 2012, at approximately 1100 hours, I happened upon a serious head on motor vehicle collision on Route 4 in Grafton, NH. I identified myself to Grafton public safety personnel on scene and offered my assistance with patient care.

Subsequent to this, Canaan Fire Department and FAST were requested for mutual aid to assist in this incident. As I was inside of this heavily damaged vehicle with a severely injured patient, I offered my suggestions as to what would be the most efficient means of extrication to safely care for this multi trauma patient. Your personnel immediately went to work in conjunction with the members of Grafton Volunteer Ambulance, as well as the Grafton Fire Department to perform patient care and assist in a most complicated extrication process due to the damage to the vehicle, as well as the patient's injuries. Your members blended together and worked to care for this patient and extricate her from the wreckage.

After witnessing this event, I felt compelled to write to you, based on my experience with the members of your fire department and ambulance crew on this call. I have responded to many similar calls in my career that have not gone nearly as smooth as this particular call. The compassion and professionalism exhibited by Canaan public safety personnel, as well as the Grafton public safety personnel was unparalleled. The mutual aid system worked as designed and was seamless.

Although taking nearly an hour to complete, this complicated rescue was a coordinated effort by many members of both towns, with every rescuer on scene playing an important role. This patient was cared for appropriately and extricated safely, without causing any further complications to her already compromised condition. Patient care was then transferred to DHART medevac personnel, who then flew her to the appropriate trauma center.

I would like to suggest some formal recognition to the public safety personnel of your community who responded on this call. The citizens of Canaan can be proud of their public safety team, as they dropped what they were doing, and answered the call without hesitation, and performed with the utmost professionalism.

I would be honored to return to the Grafton/Canaan area to assist in formally recognizing the members of all agencies who responded that day and made a difference. I have also written a similar letter to the Grafton Board of Selectmen.

Last but not least of all, I will keep this patient in my thoughts and prayers as I imagine that she will have an extensive recovery and rehabilitation process.

Respectfully,

James Collins  
Assistant Chief  
Shift Commander Group # 2  
Massport Fire-Rescue  
Boston-Logan International Airport

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