

Hanover resident: Emergency crews saved my life

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Hanover — The response efforts of emergency personnel, from dispatchers to firefighters, police officers and others who answer the call, can literally be the difference between life and death.

Disaster can strike at any time, to anyone.

And then a 911 call comes in and the first responders jump into action.

Once tragedy has been averted or a patient has been stabilized well enough for a trip to the hospital, the men and women behind the 911 buttons often remain anonymous heroes; fading into the background until the next call comes in.

During Monday night's meeting of the Hanover Board of Selectmen (Jan. 24), Town Manager Stephen Rollins took a moment to acknowledge several Hanover emergency service providers whose actions helped saved a man's life this past October.

Reading aloud a memo from Hanover Deputy Fire Chief Jeffrey Blanchard, dated Jan. 13, Rollins noted that a Hanover man had written a letter of gratitude to the town's emergency personnel who helped save him in the fall.

The man's name was withheld at his request, but the scenario took place this past October.

Rollins said that at 8:30 a.m. one day in the fall, Donna Craig and James Malone were working their shifts at the Hanover Emergency Communications Center. Craig was assigned to dispatch police calls and Malone was dispatching fire calls.

Rollins said James answered a 911 call from a woman that morning, who said her husband had collapsed.

Rollins said Craig, who had overheard the conversation, immediately sent a police cruiser to the residence, and then began providing life saving emergency medical directions to the woman of the phone while Malone notified staff at fire headquarters and dispatched an ambulance and a rescue truck.

The dispatchers, Rollins continued, informed the responding crews that CPR instructions were being given over the phone and that CPR was being performed.

At the time, Rollins said, Hanover Police Sgt. John Owens and officer Steve Moar were just around the corner from the residence, and they and arrived at 8:31 a.m. and began providing medical care.

The response from the fire department included firefighter/paramedics Richard Salvucci and Eric Barron in the ambulance and Captain Donald Harrington, firefighter EMT-Intermediate Gino DeAcetis and firefighter Paramedic Justin Reed in Rescue 1 fire truck.

"Captain Harrington requested that a 'Code Red' be transmitted," Rollins read. "A 'Code Red' summons additional off-duty firefighters to the scene for assistance."

Rollins said at the home Owens and Moar realized the patient wasn't breathing and used a Bag Mask Valve to ventilate the patient and check for a pulse.

"No pulse was found and CPR was administered," Rollins said. "They applied their automated external defibrillator and delivered the first shock."

At 8:35 a.m. the ambulance and the rescue truck arrived at the house.

A second shock was needed and then administered.

Rescue breathing was continued while the patient's pulse was checked.

The patient still had no pulse.

Rollins said Salvucci then resumed CPR and Barron secured the patient's airway and administered oxygen.

Harrington and DeAcetis brought additional supplies into the house and set up the back of the ambulance.

Police officer Paul Torino and off-duty Fire Captains James Gallagher and Robert Kenney arrived to offer assistance.

"The patient was placed on a backboard and onto the stretcher before being removed from the home and placed into the ambulance," Rollins said. "Firefighters applied a cardiac monitor and determined that the patient's heart had begun to beat. At this time the patient began to breathe on his own."

Gallagher drove the ambulance to South Shore Hospital in Weymouth while Salvucci, Barron and Reed continued to tend to the patient in the back of the ambulance.

Rollins said the emergency crews administered a new treatment, inducing mild hypothermia to improve neurologic outcome (bringing the nervous system back) after cardiac arrest.

The patient was given Lidocaine via an intravenous line to stabilize his cardiac arrhythmia.

Rollins said the patient arrived at the hospital with a strong pulse and good respirations.

"The patient received a cardiac catheterization at the hospital and was discharged to his home seven days later," Rollins read.

Selectmen praised the work of the personnel involved.

"That's a great story," selectmen chairman David Greene said upon hearing the story. "I don't know what to say after that."

"That is why the Board of Selectmen always say 'you cannot cut emergency personnel'," selectman Dan Pallotta added.