

**PINE TREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.**

*Dan Monahan, Esq. ♦ Bangor Area Office*

115 Main Street

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Bangor, Maine 04401

(207) 774-3219 ♦ V/TTY: 711 ♦ (207) 942-8323 FAX

[www.ptla.org](http://www.ptla.org) ♦ [dmonahan@ptla.org](mailto:dmonahan@ptla.org)

September 26, 2017

James Bennett  
Public Access Officer  
City of Biddeford,  
P.O. Box 586  
Biddeford, ME 04005

**Attn: FOAA Request**

Dear Mr. Bennett:

Our office represents Melissa Merrill. Under the Maine Freedom of Access Act § 402 et seq., I am requesting an opportunity to inspect or obtain copies of all reports or other public records regarding the car accident that occurred at the South Street Bridge in Biddeford involving Karen Merrill of North Waterboro and Shaun Barter's vehicle driving off the road and into Swan Pond on or about February 9, 2017. It is my understanding that the Biddeford fire and police departments responded to the accident and may have some responsive records. See attached Press Herald news article from February 9, 2017 for more information.

Pine Tree Legal Assistance is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to low-income Mainers. Melissa Merrill is indigent and we request that you waive all fees associated with this request. This information is not being sought for commercial purposes.

If you decide not to waive the fees, please notify me in advance what the costs will be.

If you intend to deny this request, I will expect to hear from you within the five business days, as mandated by law. If you decide that a portion of a record is exempted from disclosure, please redact the exempted section of the record and release the remainder. Also, if you expect a significant delay in responding to this request, please contact me with information about when I may come and inspect the requested records or otherwise expect copies.

If you have any questions please contact me at 207-400-3299. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Daniel Monahan  
Attorney for Melissa Merrill

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NEWS

Posted February 9 Updated February 9

INCREASE FONT SIZE **A+**

# Two people rescued in Biddeford after SUV plunges into icy pond

The vehicle was partially submerged after sliding off a slippery road just before noon, and its occupants had to be helped to escape safely.

BY DENNIS HOEY STAFF WRITER



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A man and a woman were rescued Thursday after their SUV went off the South Street bridge in Biddeford. *Photo by Marnie MacLean/WCSH*

Two people were rescued by Biddeford firefighters Thursday after their sport utility vehicle went off the South Street bridge and crashed into the ice-covered pond below.

Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Duross said the SUV left the road shortly before noon, went down an embankment and plunged into Swan Pond.



An SUV made this hole in the ice on Swan Pond after it went off the South Street bridge in Biddeford on Thursday morning. *Photo courtesy WCSH-TV*

A man and a woman got out of the partially submerged vehicle, but were unable to climb up the steep embankment. The water is about 4 or 5 feet deep at the point where the SUV landed.



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Two Biddeford

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Several firefighters stood on the bridge and pulled the victims up the embankment.

Duross said the two did not appear to have been seriously injured, but may have had hypothermia. "They were in the water for 20 maybe 30 minutes," he said.

They were taken to Southern Maine Health Care in Biddeford, where they were treated and released.

Deputy Police Chief JoAnne Fisk identified the driver as Karen Merrill, 43, of Waterboro. Fisk said Merrill was driving a 2003 Jeep Liberty. Fisk was unable to provide the identity of the man who was riding in the SUV.

Duross said the accident was discovered by a Biddeford Public Works Department employee, who notified rescue workers.

"Fortunately, the vehicle landed upright or it could have been a lot worse," Duross said.

He described road conditions at the time, around 11:56 a.m., as extremely icy and slippery, factors he said likely caused the crash.

The accident, though unfortunate, was timely. Duross said firefighters have been training for ice rescues for several weeks.

*Staff Writer Dennis Hoey can be contacted at*

701 6265 or at: