

**Minutes**  
**Local Emergency Coordinating Committee**  
**January 5, 2017**  
**Town Hall Conference B**

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.  
**Present:** Julie Blanchard, Town Council; Andy Brodersen, Town Council; Mark Palmer, Police Department; Geoff Firth, CVFA; Mike Domkowski, CVFA; Rick Landry, NCVFD; Ray Eldridge, NCVFD; Mark Kiefer, Public Works; Noel Waite, Fire Administrator/Emergency Management; John Elsesser, Town Manager; Laura Stone, Town Manager's Office
2. Minutes of the September 1, 2016 meeting were accepted.
3. **Agency Updates:**
  - Police Department – Mark Palmer:
    - Olivia Beausoleil was sworn in on December 27<sup>th</sup> and has started at the Academy with graduation set for mid-June followed by 12 weeks of field work. We look forward to getting our additional officer on board later this spring.
  - NCVFD – Ray Eldridge:
    - A new light tower is to be installed on the rescue truck. There is a recall for the side rails which will require 40 hours of work so the truck will be down for a week.
    - One of our members just passed Fire Fighter I certification.
  - Public Works – Mark Kiefer:
    - Winter has been mild so far. We did have an opportunity to use the new backhoe and it worked well. It will help preserve the life of the loader.
    - We took delivery on the new small dump truck which will be helpful as it can carry salt.
    - The crew is doing roadside mowing and cutting back on invasive plants.
    - We are sanding and repainting the wash bay. The magnesium chloride is damaging it. There are two schools of thought for use of chemicals vs. sand/salt. Chemicals take a toll.
    - Work continues on the lake gate. R-bar will go in next week. Decent weather is forecast for next week. It will take a month to pour all the concrete.
    - Mark is working on budget and lining up summer roads to complete prep work prior to chip seal.
  - CVFA – Geoff Firth:
    - We are working well with North Coventry and hope for continued improvement as time goes on.
  - Fire/EMS/Emergency Management – Noel Waite:
    - We ended 2016 with call-outs for 4 fires – none were large. We generally have 15-18 so it was a good year.
    - In December we were notified by OEMS that the hearing officer recommended approval of the ambulance PSA name change. January 5<sup>th</sup> is the closing date to express concerns and then it goes to the Commissioner for signature – we anticipate a 2-3 week approval process. We are hoping to have things under control in 60 days.
    - The Quint apparatus is coming from Rocky Hill to Five Star at the end of the month. There will be a short punch list to address and some parts to be ordered. Ray Eldridge said we are planning to go as a group to review the truck and begin with training. A lot of classroom work has been done already. We expect the truck to go into service in April.
    - The SCBA compressor at Station 8 has been ordered. We expect it in early March. The package we went with came with hose and a separate hose reel to fill bottles. Instead of installing it at Station 8 we will take the hose reel to Station 11 and fill there. Pricing was very favorable. John Elsesser said we may market the old one for sale while it has some life.
    - Ray Eldridge asked if there is something that can be done to address the response issues at the Andover town line. There is a house in Coventry (Hendee & Long Hill) but they got an Andover address. Noel will follow up.
  - Administration – Laura Stone:
    - The winter newsletter is at the printer and will be in homes by mid-month.
    - Laura will be contacting department heads to set up budget meetings with the Town Manager.

Town Manager – John Elsesser:

- Last week we were notified that the State has made additional budget cuts, including \$68,000 in Education Cost Sharing funding and \$150,000 in LOCIP. The LOCIP authorization was approved by the State but they did not set the bonding authority. They could fix that but are not saying they will. Those projects have been frozen. The other area is a cut, along with other cuts that were made over the summer after our budget was adopted. We are already short \$420,000 and we will go into next year at that level, with an expected additional 20% reduction. This means a budget based on needs, not wants – and we might not even get needs. The Council Finance Committee is meeting to discuss a remediation plan on Monday and then it will go to the full Council. It is likely that cuts will happen in the budget this year. This is the economic reality for the next few years. State pensions are so out of balance that they have to do something.
- There have been some 9-1-1 complaints. With cell phones we often get multiple calls and at some point TN doesn't transfer them if they have already been reported.
- CNG is getting ready to flow the natural gas supply. We would like to know when because it might be wise to move forward with the replacement of the bad HVAC unit at CVFA. John is following up. The Town Hall complex will be a quick adjustment. Regarding oil, we have no idea where we are going to be next year. We didn't want to lock in because we are not sure how much we will need with the gas coming on line. We might have a surplus after switching over and could use that in other facilities. We might be able to use it at the South Street substation or Public Works garage. Next year's budget might have some unpredictability in oil. We locked in gasoline for one year through December 2017 – prices are jumping. We went with the same vendor.
- Electricity was locked in at 7.7 cents per KWh through 2020, which includes all fees at an estimated savings of \$110,000. It was a good decision we made last April. Solar for the Fire Departments is at 10 cents per KWh, which is about 5 cents cheaper than Eversource with the distribution charges. Town Hall and the Police carports are at about a 2 cent savings.
- Thanks to the Fire Departments for supporting the Christmas in the Village event and for bringing Santa to the tree lighting ceremony.
- Rt. 31 construction is in winter shutdown but they may do some off-road work. It will start up again in the spring and there will be a couple weeks of severe business impacts. The utilities are moved so we think the work will go fairly quickly now. CT DOT has informed us that they are planning to mill and pave from the Library to Rt. 32. WPCA has to find funds to replace the affected manholes. The road is bad in that area so it will be good to get it done.
- We are waiting for the final approval to put the Lake/Cross Street project out to bid. We are anticipating a May construction start. This is the missing link for sidewalks to Monument Hill. The project will also tighten the curve and t-off the intersection at Cross and Lake. There will be a lot of improvements for student safety at Robertson School and water drainage improvements to keep oil out of the lake. It is a big project. The section of Cross we did already will get a final coat – it is only binder now.
- Three Town-owned properties are for sale. All have sewer.
- There was a sprinkler accident at the school gym and the floor has to be replaced. Sprinkler guards will be put in place to prevent balls from striking the sprinkler heads in the future.

Town Council – Julie Blanchard:

- Julie asked if there have been changes to 9-1-1. Mark Palmer replied we had a number of meetings with TN (Tolland County Dispatch). We decided the most efficient system, rather than expanding to be our own PSAP, would be to develop a system to transfer data to the Police Department through the CAD system. TN will pay for it. There might be some small costs to us. When complete this will be a more secure method for the transfer of information to us.

4. **2017 CT Emergency Management Symposium:**

Information was provided on this event, which is free. People who are interested in going can register themselves.

5. **Other Business:**

Mark Palmer noted that there will be a regional program about the opioid epidemic on February 8<sup>th</sup>, Tolland High School at 5:30 PM. John said this issue is important so please spread the word. Mark said we are looking at purchasing a different type of Narcan. OEMS regulations only authorize two doses of 2 milligrams each. New units are being marketed in Connecticut but OEMS won't approve them. We will discuss it further and let you know if we get them.

6. **Applications for membership to Town of Coventry Fire Department:**

Committee members not part of the Fire Departments departed the meeting. Noel Waite added this item to the agenda, saying since the ordinance passed we have gotten requests to join the "Town of Coventry Fire Department", not North or South. Now with the process of obtaining the PSA we've gotten even more inquiries. To gauge interest he developed a Town membership application and a half dozen people have submitted it so far. He wants to start a dialogue to see what the Council would like us to do.

John Elsesser noted there are a few issues, such as employer ID numbers – who pays the stipend? Noel Waite replied all that will be transferring.

John said we can't just have employees who don't have supervision. The ambulance is a little cleaner because there is a chain of command but for Fire there is no chief. This was one of the CRCOG report recommendations but it was brushed aside. Ray Eldridge said you need to have officers. Rick Landry said there needs to be a structure for rules and regulations. That won't happen overnight.

John said we need to update the contracts because things have changed. The contracts are similar with some minor differences. The intent all along has been for CVFA to man the ambulance. Noel said the only thing that is changing is the name of the entity and who is paying. Rick said he thinks the Fire Board has a lot of work to do to get things in place. Noel said OEMS and the Truck Committee work took precedence. Policy committees were formed but nobody signed up to help. John said one solution could be to look at the rules in place and start using the ones that are better. North Coventry's might be the most recent. We could give membership a set timeframe to express concerns before implementation. The griping is not helping.

Mike Dombkowski said he doesn't think it is workable unless there is one chief. He asked if there is a way to move in that direction. He doesn't see a way to deliver a consistent product to the community otherwise. John replied he still thinks we need a structure where a Fire Board is in place. We never expected the associations to dissolve. If the Board thinks we should begin to develop a job description for a chief, we are moving into budget season so it should be done soon. We need to develop a structure for deputies too. Noel said there are two ways it can go: both departments can vote on an approach, or the Council could determine it but that could create potential bylaw problems. John said we have to have a planned structure. We need to agree on a job description and selection process. His preference would be to have a local person serve as chief.

Mike Dombkowski said it might be beneficial to work on a command structure and develop a diagram. He asked if there is an existing committee to do that. Noel replied we tried several times but the work never proceeded. We need to come to some type of agreement as to what road to take. Mike said he thinks that makes sense. Geoff Firth expressed doubt that this would work. Rick Landry said he thinks we need to start from the ground up. Now will we vet people? He thinks the chief needs to be from outside the community to get rid of problems. He said that NCVFD is upset and confused over the process. He feels since the ordinance passed we now have three fire departments.

Julie Blanchard said the Town starts the structure. Rick said the end goal has never been explained. Julie said the associations were afforded the opportunity to participate during the Ad-Hoc Committee meetings. John Elsesser said the goal was to standardize the rules and procedures and consolidate the budget. The Board of Fire Officers was created to develop agreement on topics. They did the truck plan which was good. Now we need to get back to standardization of rules and procedures. If both departments want a central chain of command we will have to work together. The new specialized equipment we are receiving may require it. We are running out of people. The vision was not for him or the Council to tell them what to do. The goal was to have the Board do it.

Noel Waite said in order to come up with workable policies and procedures we need to have a starting point. Julie Blanchard said that will be part of the budget process. Rick Landry said we might look at the Town of Vernon for a model. Noel mentioned Andover, Canton and Farmington as other possible examples. Rick requested that the Fire Board be allowed to discuss this at length and put their thoughts forward. Noel said we would like feedback and guidance from the Town Council. The Fire Board meetings are public and the next one is Thursday at 6 PM at Station 11.

John Elsesser said he has to put together a budget for FY 2017/18 and will put in a placeholder while the Board keeps working. We will check with other towns. These issues are not unique – other towns have them too. Julie Blanchard said she will be happy to put some of these issues on the Council agenda. John asked if a letter stating the path would be helpful and the consensus was that it would be. He will develop a draft.

7. **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM on a motion by Geoff Firth, seconded by Rick Landry and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone