

Minutes
Local Emergency Coordination Committee
January 7, 2021
(Virtual meeting due to COVID-19 safety guidelines)

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM.
Present: John Elsesser, Laura Stone, Beth Mancini, Mark Palmer, Bud Meyers, Jim McLoughlin, Ted Opdenbrouw
Absent: Matthew O'Brien, Jr., Julie Blanchard
2. **Audience of Citizens:** none.
3. **COVID-19 Update – John Elsesser:**
 - We are working on an update to the plan for departments and facilities, incorporating feedback from staff. We are moving toward returning to service by appointment only. We may keep the building and tax departments open. The building office is having a break-in period with the new permit software.
 - The vaccination schedule is not clear. We expect some clarification Tuesday.
 - We had some issues at Town Hall, the Police Department, and Public Works but most employees are back from quarantine. Thanks to Eastern Highlands Health District for performing the contract tracing.
 - We should be getting past the New Year holiday issues in a couple of days.
 - Jim McLoughlin said we are using the South Street station to help separate the public works crew. Regarding vaccines, when there are several doses left in a vial at the end of the day, there is some vaccine left that can't be used. We are working with the Health District to develop a short-notice list. Beth is the contact person if an extra dose is available.
 - Testing – the list of available clinics comes out on a fairly regular basis and has a link for locations. There is priority testing for first responders. Category 1b is still being defined. The Governor's office is getting a lot of pressure to add certain groups to the priority list. Once we know who is defined they can be uploaded and get instructions.
 - The COVID variant was detected in our state in New Haven. Both cases were young people who have traveled.
 - Per State law, fingerprinting services must be reopened.

Agency updates:

Police Department – Mark Palmer:

- Our two new officers were sworn in – their profiles are on Facebook. Both look to be a good fit. Loren Santiago starts remote Academy training tomorrow and is scheduled to graduate mid-July, at which point he will do field training. He will be on his own in mid-September. Nathan Provost will do three weeks of CT certification, and then four weeks of field training. He will be on his own in early March.
- Staff is in the process of getting their first vaccines.
- We are making a change in the detective position. Officer Grimaldi will be assuming this role as Detective Krukoff returns to the patrol division.
- Fingerprinting services are coming off hiatus starting January 13. We will be offering it on Wednesdays only for several weeks.
- There were a few bad emergency calls over the past couple of weeks. We appreciate the invitation from Jim McLoughlin to debrief along with other emergency personnel.

Fire Department – Beth Mancini:

- A few contract tracings were done – everybody is back online. A few people have gotten their first vaccine, and are scheduled for their second.

Fire Chief – Bud Meyers:

- We had 1326 calls for the year, which is higher than the previous year. (See detailed stats for October-December in report attached to these minutes.)
- ET 118 is awaiting an air compressor. It is operable without it and should be useable until it can be repaired.
- Rescue 418 is out for installation of tools on the slide-out tray.
- Overhead door panel replacements are pending.
- We are switching the forestry equipment from the '86 Chevrolet to the '97 Ford.
- One of our members experienced an injury after a water rescue. We are working through our insurance to see if anything can be done.
- We have three new members – two junior, and one member is moving from junior to regular. Three members are taking the Fire Service Instructor 1 class. One member is taking the Firefighter 2 class, and four members are taking the “So you want to be a Fire Officer” class.

Coventry Public Schools – Ted Opdenbrouw:

- We got the Fire Marshal’s report on the inspection of our five schools. Five minor infractions were addressed by facility maintenance and all should be to code now.
- There have been a few positive COVID cases among the student population, but we are holding our own.

Fire/EMS/Emergency Management – Jim McLoughlin:

- The post-emergency call debrief session was attended by 17 individuals and was well received.
- We are doing a six-month review of the fire merger progress. General consensus is that it is going well.
- We continue to link to training opportunities for those who want permanent positions. All training is currently virtual.
- The departments participated in a holiday light parade, fill the boot campaign, and Christmas gift delivery initiative.
- The key fob project is nearing completion. All three facilities have working fobs and we just need to transfer data to the server.
- We have updated fire department documents on the website, including mission statement, vision, and a member application form.
- We are getting quotes for fire alarm inspections.

Administration – Laura Stone:

- The winter newsletter is slightly behind schedule, but we plan for it to be in homes by the end of the month.
- Submissions for the February e-blast are due on January 15.

Town Manager – John Elsesser:

- Bill Watkins has been hired as the Director of Public Works. He has 17 years of experience, including the City of New London and Town of Clinton. He starts next week.

- Budget meetings with departments are pending. Watch for meeting invitations. Most will be done via ZOOM.
- The State is looking at changing curve signs. An informational meeting is set for January 14 at 6:30 PM. Maps are on the website.
- When the new police cruisers come online, we will do some shuffling in the fleet. Mark Palmer noted that one of the vehicles was brought to J&S this week. It takes a while but we are pushing. John said that the Red Suburban will go back to fire police, and the Interceptor will replace the public works vehicle. Mark noted that the sedan is to be auctioned.
- The job description for Assistant Emergency Management Director was approved. We will be filling it to provide additional coverage.
- The walls are up at Dollar General. We have heard that Husky Pizza will go into the Beebe's site. Some activity is happening at the Reid's site – we have heard it may be a burger place, but we haven't seen any permit applications yet.
- Last week was tough for our emergency responders. We appreciate all that you do.
- There are some vacancies at Meadowbrook Plaza. Swiss Cleaners is closing. The space is too small for Integrated Rehab. A medical doctor may also be moving, though we haven't heard anything official. The accountant may also be moving.
- In the Village, the gym and trainer are both out, and Rusty Relic moved to a building in another town that they purchased. Housing development is strong. The building office is swamped.
- Folly Lane Bridge should be open next week. The bridge rail was back-ordered. We may have to close it again briefly in the spring for final pavement coat and landscaping.
- Swamp Road/Rt. 44 project is getting ready for final plan revisions. Construction is anticipated in May/June.
- An informational meeting will be held soon on the Hop River Bridge replacement. It is going to full design with construction anticipated in 2022.
- The South Street pedestrian improvements project is still on pace for summer construction, barring any issues with bat mating season. An archeological survey was required by the State.
- We are still working on a public information meeting for the Main Street sidewalks at Birch Bend.
- This year will be the third year of the Road Bond work.
- CT Water is about ready to flow water from Eagleville. We are talking with them regarding a water tower that would allow hydrants in the Village.

4. Coming Events:

Mark Palmer said we are not clear on plans for the Make-Wish Road Race, targeted for March 20. The event will not take place at the high school. We have heard they are considering the Homestead. Their plans for COVID restrictions are unknown – we don't see any plans to address social distancing. The first year was not good, because they blocked traffic. The next year we required some measures to prevent that. Mark will assign a sergeant to coordinate this. We can't have police volunteers.

Item tabled for receipt of a more complete event plan, on a motion by John Elsesser, seconded by Jim McLoughlin and unanimously approved.

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- John said that public works is up on the State Police radio system. Are we in the queue for the police department? Mark Palmer said he spoke with J&S last month. They are busy but he will follow up if we don't

hear soon. John noted that he has a 911 Commission meeting tomorrow. Jim said that Emergency Management picked up three portables, so we have three of our own and three from the State. He has reached out to Mike Caplet regarding allowing local programming. Currently the programming includes DPW and the Town, but not PD. Mark said he had asked that PD not be programmed in based on issues of pursuit and the need for radio silence. He thinks it would be better to use the town-wide channel. He thinks it should go through dispatch. Jim replied there would be limited distribution. He and Mark will discuss further. We may consider removing this item from the agenda at this point. John will review prior to the next agenda.

6. **Fire Transition Study Committee:** Jim McLoughlin said the committee did not meet in December, so there is nothing additional to report. The next meeting is scheduled for January 14. Topics to be discussed include the selection process for permanent positions, budget, injury policies, incentives, and an annual gala.
7. **Other Business:** Jim participated in a webinar training by Eversource. They are moving to an online portal for Level 2 & 3 events. We can create a group email for notifications (i.e. EOC@coventryct.org) or Jim could receive messages and forward them. Mark Palmer noted that the police dispatch has already set up a group email. John and Jim will discuss this further.
8. **Adjournment:**
The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 PM on a motion by Bud Meyers, seconded by Jim McLoughlin and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone