

Minutes
Local Emergency Coordination Committee
September 2, 2021
(Virtual meeting due to COVID-19 safety guidelines)

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM by Town Manager John Elsesser
Present: John Elsesser, Laura Stone, Mark Palmer, Bill Watkins, Ted Opdenbrouw, Jim McLoughlin, Beth Mancini
Absent: Julie Blanchard, Matthew O'Brien, Jr., Bud Meyers
2. **Audience of Citizens:** none.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:**
Mark Palmer moved to accept the minutes of the August 5, 2021 meeting. The motion carried on unanimous vote.
4. **Storm Henri Debrief:**
Jim McLoughlin said we have determined a pre-storm checklist would be helpful to have in place for future events that could expedite emergency declarations, scheduling of the EOC, equipment, and other logistics such as food and media relations. The storm was a dud, but gave us a good test of our systems.

What worked well:

- Direct access to Eversource
- Staffing the fire departments

What could be better:

- UPS backups for select computers, so remote VPN access isn't lost, including the TV studio, Annex, and Finance.
- Airprint capability in the EOC

Verizon is coming out to get cell service to work at the DPW garage. We are looking a phones for North Coventry. We are getting a new printer for the Annex so print to email will work. Other thoughts are welcome.

Mark Palmer gave a shout-out to Mike Cote for list preparation and his availability to staff both the EOC and PD dispatch during the storm. He said the new CivicPlus messaging worked well and believes it is a better product than Everbridge. John said we have gotten good feedback from the community about the live list. Senator Murphy's office was impressed to learn about the live list when they called to see how Coventry was doing after the storm. We might want to share our experience with other towns.

5. **COVID-19 Update –Jim McLoughlin:**
 - Tolland County is in the high transmission category, with recommendations for wearing of facemasks indoors. Another strong recommendation is for those with compromised immune systems to avoid large gatherings.
 - John Elsesser said there have been two additional Tolland County hospitalizations. We may have to look at a vaccine mandate for employees. Some businesses are starting to ask, but we are not mandating protocols for businesses. Everyone is encouraged to respect individual business requests. We wish the State had done mandates on a statewide basis instead of

- leaving it up to individual towns. We should know about booster shots in a few weeks – first responders already meet those guidelines.
- Beth Mancini said there has been a lot of Facebook anti-mask activity, with an early dismissal/walkout statewide initiative on Sept. 3. Heads up that this could present a traffic concern.

6. Agency updates:

Public Works – Bill Watkins:

- We are still busy with Storm Henri cleanup and then the additional rainfall from Storm Ida. The biggest issue was on Wrights Mill Road. We addressed that quickly with a patch, and paving is scheduled for next week.
- The lake is still about a foot higher than it had been. The gate has been open since Tuesday and it should come down soon.
- We are still having issues with the radios in the DPW building, but we are making progress.
- We figured out the night mode issue with the phones.
- We are seeking guidelines for inclusion of minor issues on the live storm reporting sheet. Jim is of the mindset that these don't need to be included unless there are road closures or power outages.
- We are deploying one of the DPW speed signs on Daly. They are not easy to move.

Police Department – Mark Palmer:

- The swearing-in ceremony for our new officer, Aaron Calkins, is Sept. 9. He starts on 9/13. He needs some firearms training and will do three weeks of field training. We made an additional offer to an officer currently working in New London, to start in January. Officer Santiago is in phase two of field training and will be done in November.
- We are holding the sergeant's test this month.
- Mark worked with CT DEEP to draft an ordinance to declare an emergency due to lake water levels above 94 feet. DEEP was accommodating, and the proposed amendment will be on the Town Council agenda for implementation prior to the next boating season. It sets a no-wake restriction. Residents seem appreciative.

Fire/EMS/Emergency Management –Jim McLoughlin:

- We held the ice cream social event and it was a great day.
- Jim submitted the local EMS plan to the State to comply with regulations.
- The NCVFD contract to dissolve the organization is nearing final revisions.
- We are working on a SWOT analysis to develop a new vision statement.
- Hose and ladder testing is pending.
- We met with OSHA to go through fire brigade minimum standards. We're in good shape in many areas, and will receive written feedback. We will continue to address items identified as needing improvement.
- We are working to develop a peer support team.
- We met with TN on radio building and radio future.
- We will work with Ted Opdenbrouw on middle school evacuation plans.

Fire Chief – (Jim McLoughlin for Bud Meyers) full report attached to minutes:

- During the month of August we responded to 132 calls.
- No issues with apparatus to report.
- We have started annual retraining for front line drivers for all personnel.

- NCFD Board is moving forward with their dissolution plans and looking into the development of a scholarship fund. Membership votes on these plans in September.
- Columbia FD has requested gates on Parker Bridge and Hop River Roads for road closures during flood situations. It was decided not to be a good option.
- Congratulations to Captain James Galey and his family on the birth of their son.
- Lt. Alex Bohr has obtained certification through the American Heart Association as a Basic Life Support Instructor.
- Training Coordinator Cory Lachance has obtained CT Fire Service Instructor III certification.
- Beth Mancini reported that TOC EMS & EMT refresher training is pending.

Coventry Public Schools – Ted Opendbrouw:

- We experienced two incidents of criminal activity during August. A camera at GHR was damaged and the individuals were identified from video footage. Arrests were made. There was a catalytic converter theft at the middle school. We plan to park vehicles overnight in more high visibility areas.
- We are working with DPW to remove a tree at GHR which is causing a sightline obstruction.
- Security grant announcements have been pushed to October.
- We looked at the parent pickup congestion issue at CGS and came up with an idea to alleviate the problem. We added an additional lane to get 8-10 cars off the road, and put out an email to encourage kids to take the bus. We are also doing a “Golden Ticket” campaign and have more staff onsite to assist with traffic control. The first day went well, and we didn’t back traffic out onto the street. We will keep an eye on it. GHR also had some congestion, we are getting directional signage which should help.

Town Manager – John Elsesser:

- A proposed ordinance amendment banning smoking/vaping on all town property is going to a public hearing this month. There were concerns about cannabis use at Town beaches and we can’t discriminate between tobacco and cannabis use now that recreational cannabis is legal.
- John purchased a 14’ Boston Whaler for \$50 from State surplus. We will be talking to the fire department to gauge interest and develop a plan for cooperative use with community rowing. Having this boat at the dock would be quicker than deploying the police boat or getting an inflatable in the water. If you are interested in being involved in this discussion let John know.
- John also purchased an emergency trailer from DPH surplus last week for \$50. It has a value of \$110,000 and was never used. We are considering usage such as a food truck at the new softball field. John looks at the surplus list every day – let him know if you need anything.
- T-Mobile is going on the Pelletier tower, but at a lower level. Verizon wants on our tower at Town Hall, but it would take up our remaining capacity.
- There is a Spotlight on Main Street event in the Village on Sept. 9, with a walking tour and a reception at Millbrook Place. We anticipate 40/50 people will attend.
- There is a Special Town Meeting on Monday to put funds for the construction of a new softball field, and additional costs for the high school/middle school roof, which has doubled in price. HVAC costs are still to come. We are working on design – the original had issues with the rooftop location. This is the second dramatic increase in price. We are looking at an air conditioning option also.

7. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM on a motion by Beth Mancini, seconded by Mark Palmer and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone