

**Minutes**  
**Local Emergency Coordination Committee**  
**March 3, 2022**  
**(Virtual meeting due to COVID-19 safety guidelines)**

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Lisa Thomas, Town Council Chairwoman.  
**Present:** Lisa Thomas, John Elsesser, Bill Watkins, Ted Opdenbrouw, Jeff Spadjinske, Jonathan Hand, Bud Meyers  
**Absent:** Jim McLoughlin
2. **Audience of Citizens:** none.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:**  
Bud Meyers moved to accept the minutes of February 3, 2022, seconded by Jon Hand. The motion carried on unanimous vote.
4. **COVID-19 Update – John Elsesser:**
  - Facemasks are optional at Town facilities in accordance with the latest CDC guidance. We have reached out to PD and Fire for how they will respond. Spadjinske said that the PD will use discretion. Meyers said we are still requiring members to mask up on a call. Use is relaxed at the station.
  - The vaccination policy was reviewed at the Council Steering Committee and will be voted on by the full Council on Monday. It reflects current CDC guidance. Thomas: Steering voted to recommend approval. She is glad to hear the FD is masking up upon entering homes.

**Agency updates:**

**Fire Department 18 – Bud Meyers:**

- (get written report with stats from Bud)
- Thomas asked if training for the volunteer fire fighters has become burdensome. Meyers: It is ongoing all the time. It wasn't as required 15-20 years ago. EMS is 26 hours annually. Thomas: Does this impact recruitment? Meyers: It is more of a retention issue. A lot of people don't have the extra time.

**Public Works – Bill Watkins:**

- We are still busy with winter weather, but we are gearing up for spring. Street sweeping will start the week of 3/21 weather permitting, and roadside brush cutting at the same time.
- The pavement management study is complete. We are coming up with a road work list in a couple of days.
- Our new Maintainer 1 employee started and is working out well. We got a resignation so we will be looking to fill that position.
- Thomas: the pavement study was very appreciated, both for budget planning and educational purposes for the community. Watkins: It will be a great resource moving forward.

**Police Department –Jeff Spadjinske:**

- We continue to work on certification requirements and mandatory testing. We signed on with Lexipol for online training videos that will give us POST credit. This allows some flexibility.

- We had an employee give notice, so we are re-advertising for a certified officer. We are on the waiting list for the June academy.
- We still have a cruiser out for repairs – we are anticipating a 4-6 week turnaround time.
- There were 405 calls for service last month.

**Coventry Public Schools – Ted Opdenbrouw:**

- Tomorrow we are doing a presentation at the middle school entitled, “One pill can kill.” This is related to Fentanyl deaths. We are seeing an uptick in edibles, and will also discuss the dangers of vaping. Tip Line information will be provided.
- Half of the District has received active threat training. We are sending a reminder this month and will add kitchen staff.
- We received a proposal for the fire and burglar alarm system. It was not as high as anticipated, so we might be able to get a few more cameras. These will be installed over the summer.

**Fire/EMS/Emergency Management – (see attached written report from Jim McLoughlin):**

- The FD will follow the Town’s lead on masking with the exception of emergency medical response.
- The FD took receipt of new SCBA air bottles.
- OPM cited Coventry as a success story with our consolidation.
- Renewal of the ambulance registrations is in process.
- We are looking at the potential to bring in an intern for emergency management. Draft job description is under review.
- Communications needs are being assessed for town wide interoperability and to address the way we manage traffic control performed by DPW at job sites.
- We are getting prices to include Mill Brook Place, the Community Center, and Town Hall to the current vendor contract for annual fire extinguisher inspections.
- Development of a Peer Support Network Program is underway.
- Emerge Leadership Academy is offering a class to officers of the department on topics such as personality types, communication style, and working with superiors/subordinates.
- Work continues on the 5-year strategic plan.
- The status of our EMS fund was discussed with the Town Council Finance Committee.

**Town Manager – John Elsesser:**

- A Manager’s Project Memo is submitted to the Town Council every two weeks. It is contained on the Council agenda. [Link to 3/7 report.](#)
- The Manager’s proposed budget will be released on Monday. There is a lot of recovery from COVID that will require one-time expenditures.
- The landfill venting bid opening took place and will go to the Council for authorization.
- We got the final delivery of classroom air filters from UConn on Monday.
- The Library renovation project is out to bid. There is a walk-through tomorrow.
- The roof project is in review – we await State approval to move forward. HVAC is also on hold – we hope for plans from ICBS, but we need the roof plan. We are also finalizing walls code compliance work. Staff resources are limited.
- The Rt. 44/Swamp intersection project should start back up soon. We await mastheads for signals.
- We got notice of funding for the South Road project and pedestrian improvements – funding will be in two phases.

- The State is looking for reduction in line items on the trails grants. They made the trail wider which increased the cost by 25% and we don't have the funds. There is a two-year timeframe so it could be a problem. We are going back to them with alternatives.
- We have started discussions on sewers. We had a discussion with Windham. Mansfield/UConn might also be an option, as well as Bolton.
- Budget is the big thing for the next month. There are four new Council members so there is a learning curve. We need to support them so that they can make good decisions. The Manager's Budget Hearing is set for March 10 at 7 PM.
- Thomas: The Council set a budget meeting schedule that doesn't put too much of a burden on any one night.

**5. EMS Fund Discussion:**

Elsesser: This ties into the budget in terms of making people aware of the impact of COVID and going to 24/7 service. The improved speed of response is astonishing. We have been able to handle every second call lately. The system is working well, but there is a cost to it. We are separating it out as a line item so people will see the real cost. The survey shows people may be willing to pay more. There is no real good alternative. We don't think anyone wants to say we're not responding at night. This would be a one-time adjustment and then will be in the base budget going forward. Thomas: Volunteer recognition is a key issue.

**6. Other Business:**

- Elsesser: The event organizers are planning to go ahead with CoventryFest this year. June 25 with a rain date of June 26. They are doing fundraising. We will have them in to discuss their plans.
- Elsesser: There has been some economic development activity at Highland Plaza. A clothing store is moving in to where Swiss Cleaners was, and we are hoping to shift space for the package store to expand Integrated Rehab. We are still working on the medical/dental site by Dollar General. Space is very tight – it may require special permits.

**7. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 PM on a motion by Bud Meyers, seconded by Jonathan Hand and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone