

Minutes

Local Emergency Coordinating Committee Meeting

December 1, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM.

Present: John Elsesser, Bill Watkins, Ted Opdenbrouw, Ray Eldridge, Jonathan Hand, Lisa Thomas, Bud Meyers, Jim McLoughlin, Eric Peterson (arrived 5:25 PM), Ken Boutin, Laura Stone.

Audience of Citizens: None.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Jonathan Hand moved to accept the minutes from November 3, 2022, seconded by Jim McLoughlin. One correction was made on page 4 under Ted Opdenbrouw's report, in the first sentence under the second bullet: add the word IN so that the sentence reads, "each school in the district." The motion to correct the minutes as amended carried on unanimous vote.

COVID-19 Update – John Elsesser:

The Governor's report came out this afternoon and it appears the numbers are rising rapidly. Medicines such antibiotics are hard to come by because they are being used to treat RSV. Lisa Thomas said COVID finally caught me. When you're in a room full of second graders it is hard to avoid.

Events:

Veterans Day Road Race Debrief:

John Elsesser said he heard the event went smoothly - feedback was positive. It was a safe and emotional event. A 100-year old WWII veteran was there and a Coventry resident finished her 169 town race goal. Jon Hand said it was a great day, and a beautiful day for it.

Fill the Boot 12/3/22:

Bud Meyers said the plan is we'll have members at Dunkin' Donuts and Highland Park Market to solicit contributions for PJ Day. John said that Town Hall has put together a team for PJ Day – Cat in Recreation is running it. We have sent an invite out. It has been informal the last two years, but we are trying to make participation more sanctioned. Lisa said she has invited the Town Council to wear their PJ's on Monday at the Council meeting.

Christmas in the Village 12/4/22:

John Elsesser said hopefully the weather won't be too cold. It is supposed to be dry. We think everything is set up. The Fire Police are too occupied on other events so Coventry Police will try to cover traffic control as best they can. They are planning to have cruisers at both ends of the Village with lights on to slow cars up. Bud said that Ray will coordinate cones down the center of the road as they have done in the past. Jim said he has discussed equipment and supplies needed with DPW. We are using the regional light tower – we are picking it up tomorrow. John noted that one side of the church is very dark so we will put the tower there to help people

move about safely. Jim said this prevents us from having to tie up a fire apparatus. Bill said he will check for “slow” signs. Jim said that the electronic sign board had some problems but it has been fixed. He suggests we put a message on it and deploy it at Rt. 275 and Main Street, if we have staff to program it. John said that Recreation and the community groups are ready and excited.

Toy Drive 12/10/22:

Jim said the toy drive will take place at fire station 218 near the grammar school. Hours: 10 AM – 1 PM.

Wreaths Across America 12/17:

Lisa said this is always a beautiful ceremony. She will speak along with whoever else has been invited. Bud said the FD will bring the ladder truck w/flag.

Agency updates:

Public Works – Bill Watkins:

- We wrapped up paving season. South Street was the last project. It was re-planed and will sit in binder over winter. The weather didn't last to get final paving there. It will have reflective markings.
- Tree work is ongoing. Tenet Tree is working on some large ones.
- Winter equipment is ready to go. On Friday afternoons all plows will be pinned up on the trucks and ready to go in case we get a weekend call. We purchased a small weather station to put on the antenna at Public Works. Once it is fully operational it will have Wi-Fi and you can log in to see what the weather is at PW. John said we used to have one on the radio tower but it got fried. Bill said we will try it out and if it works we can deploy a few others, i.e. at the south end of town where weather is often different.

Public Schools – Ted Opendbrouw:

- Ted and Jimmy have been working on an after-event reunification project – he will let Jimmy give the update on this.
- Lisa asked whether swatting incidents are still a concern. Ted replied he is not aware of any incidents over the last two weeks.

Fire/EMS/Emergency Management – Jim McLoughlin:

- We are looking to finalize the sale on old ambulance 618 – it should be wrapped up next week.
- The issue with our fire extinguishers is resolved. All have been tested and put back in the appropriate facilities.
- We provided CPR training for staff.
- There is a 40-week lead time on the new generator.
- We issued new portable radios to DPW.

- The Fire Prevention poster contest pick up was scheduled for today but nothing was submitted. We are disappointed.
- We are working on family reunification meeting places. There is a walk-through at First Congregational Church on Monday. Lisa is thankful that the churches are offering their spaces for family reunification – maybe we can send a letter of appreciation from the Town Council.
- Equipment for the cross band radio has been ordered.
- The new ET is getting a final inspection 12/13-16 in Wisconsin. If it goes well, it leaves the factory within two days.
- We are participating in fill the boot, stuff a truck, Christmas in the Village, and Wreaths Across America.
- We have assigned each of strategic plan goals to an officer of the fire department to begin work.
- We are planning to attend a recruitment and retention workshop in Norwich next week.
- We had a meeting yesterday with Vintech – our contract is up in 18 months and we anticipate these services may cost significantly more money.
- Ray has been gathering information on the establishment of a Coventry CERT team. Ray said he met with the Manchester EMD yesterday to get CERT started. We will need a letter of intent from our EMD and a mission statement sent to CRCOG. Then they follow a process to accept us. The CERT class is a minimum of 10, and a maximum max of 25 people. Manchester is starting a class in March on Thursdays for a couple of hours a night. When you get your CERT people, for insurance purposes, workers comp is covered by DEMHS. John noted that we still have some kits downstairs. Ray said there is some grant money that goes with this, at 50 cents per capita. Manchester gets \$40k per year. John noted that for Coventry it would be about \$6200 per year. Ray said there are many different components: traffic, search and rescue, a drone team, and a boat team. It's a matter of keeping people engaged. He has a video that can be shared. Lisa asked if there is a cap on the number of people from the community. Ray said Manchester has 75 people on the books – about 15 show up for all his events. There is no age limit. He is willing to share all his information and books. John said we could reach out to our previous CERT members to see if anyone is interested in re-upping. Ray said that would be helpful. Lisa said Tolland also has a CERT team.

Fire Department – Bud Meyers:

- For the month of November, we responded to 188 calls consisting of 52 BLS, 33 ALS, 2 cardiac arrests for a total of 87 medical calls. We also responded to 1 structure fire, 2 brush fires, 5 MVA's, 6 false alarms, 7 tree and wires, 2 hazardous materials, and 8 good intent. We have already done 3 more calls than during all of last year.
- Ambulance 618 still needs some work before re-deployment.
- We started preventive maintenance on our apparatus, and took care of an electrical issue on one of the ETs.
- We are asking officers to be the lead on our strategic plan goals, with at least one member to assist. If they wish to reach out to the public they are encouraged to do so.

Police Department – Eric Peterson:

- November was a busy month with more arrests than is typical.
- We will have officers on hand to assist with Christmas in the Village, and met with Ray Oliver to discuss.
- Interviews for a certified officer are taking place tomorrow. The position was frozen but will be unfrozen as of the first of the year.
- Our new dispatcher completed training.
- Jim McLoughlin gave kudos to Mike Cote on uploading live data during the recent storm. John noted that our technical capability has come a long way. It could be time to promote accessing the live list before calling. Lisa asked if it is always the same link, and if so, could we put it out in a newsletter, social media etc. John said we need to get it on our website too. Jim said there is a read-only list for the public to look at. Input can be done by Mike Cote, DPW staff, etc. Before every storm we clear the live sheet and save a copy of prior reports as a PDF so we still have a record of what occurred. The link is always the same. John said at some point if we can find money it might be good to do a decal that can be distributed with tax bills, etc. It would be helpful to have on hand. Maybe we can do something in the newsletter like “cut this out”. Eric asked if we have the capability to see how many people have logged in. Jim will check.

Town Manager – John Elsesser:

- We are trying to submit a BRIC grant application for microgrid electrical work – it got stuck in the “FEMA Go” grant portal that didn’t work – so we couldn’t submit. The State has responded by giving us a 2-week extension. The original deadline was tomorrow at 3 PM. The application is immense, and if there is an error on any page it is supposed to show, but it is not. It is the worst application process he has seen in his career. The application is coming in at \$1.5 million. The State has \$2 million.
- We did get the sustainability grant application submitted today for drainage repairs that Mindy, Todd and Bill worked on. It was an excellent team effort. Kudos to Mindy for spearheading it.
- The School HVAC grant application has been submitted and acknowledged.
- The new postmaster from the Coventry Post Office came in today to discuss issues for mail delivery on North School Road. She is incredulous that the road is closed to the post office and she is fighting with the Mansfield Post Office to remove this ban. It might be appropriate to suspend deliveries for a few weeks in the winter, but deliveries should be resumed again after the worst is over. We finally have someone on our team. John will be sharing the road report with her.
- We met with the athletic department from UConn, who gave us plans to tear down and reconstruct the boat house at Patriots Park. They would like us to do the work but we don’t think that is possible. It would be a \$1.5 million project. They want it to happen in time for next summer. We’re not going out to a town meeting on this.

Town Council – Lisa Thomas:

Everybody is going to be starting to work on budgets. Please be as conservative and creative as

you can be. You saw what happened last season – we couldn't pass a budget with less than a mil increase to hold onto our ambulance staff. We are already looking at overruns. She doesn't want to be a downer, but it is going to be a tough year. If we want to keep everybody safe we are going to have to be creative to get voter approval.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:46 PM on a motion by Bud Meyers, seconded by Jonathan Hand and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone