Minutes  
Local Emergency Coordinating Committee  
February 6, 2020  
Town Hall Conference Room B

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.  
Present: Julie Blanchard, Town Council; Bud Meyers, Fire Marshal/NCVFD; Mark Palmer, Chief of Police; Mark Kiefer, Public Works Director; Lenny Bragdon, Coventry Public Schools; Ryan Boutin, CVFA; John Elsesser, Town Manager.

2. Acceptance of Minutes:  
Bud Meyers moved to accept the minutes of the January 2, 2020 meeting, seconded by Mark Palmer. A correction was requested on page two, second line of the last paragraph: GALEA should be CALEA. The motion to accept the minutes as corrected carried on unanimous vote.


4. Coming Events:  
- Ice Fishing Class and Practice, 2/8/20: The class is still on but practice will not take place with the thin ice we are experiencing with warmer temperatures this winter.
- RimaConn relay, 8/29/20: Chief Palmer noted this is the third year for this event. The Hartford Marathon organization is requesting permission to go through our town. It is a 96-mile run through 20 towns. The course stays on the rails to trails path and there is no anticipated traffic impact and no need for town services. John said he doesn’t think we need to meet with the race organizers but he does want people to know there will be a group of people running on the trail that day. Bud said we might run the utility out vehicle out.
- Veterans Day Patriot Race, November 2020: John said we already received the permit request for this event. Mark Palmer noted that they want to begin advertising. It went smoothly last year but if it gets much bigger we may need to close roads for the entire race. John said the only hiccup this year was that UConn was removing their boats from Patriots Park and that tied up some of the parking.

5. Updates:

NCVFD – Bud Meyers:  
- During the month of January, NCVFD responded to 36 calls: 1 structure fire, 1 vehicle fire, 1 brush fire, 1 fuel burner/boiler malfunction, 1 hazardous condition, 3 CO-related, 8 MVA’s, 5 false alarms, 8 wires down, 4 good intent and 3 medical.
- For the structure fire, we responded with all the engine tankers (3), along with the truck, tanker, engine, rescue and ambulance along with 24 personnel.
- One of the MVAs was a rollover resulting in a fatality. Another was a head-on collision with rollover necessitating transport by LifeStar. A third MVA caught on fire. An average of 13 personnel responded to these calls.
- Equipment: ET 211, ET 311 and T111 were sent to DPW for preventive maintenance, R211 continues to see an increase responding to calls, with four new drivers within the last three months.
- We are in the process of ordering five sets of turnout gear and miscellaneous PPE. We are also pricing SCBA bottles and masks.
The departments have ordered a new printer/software that can be used town-wide; this is to improve our ability to issue ID tags that are required for accountability on emergency scenes and hospitals.

Public Works – Mark Kiefer:
- Snow – we have had 12 call outs this season, including the one this morning. We have received 16 and a quarter inches of snow to date, which is not a lot of volume, but is a lot of frequency. We have used about 45% of our salt, with 700 tons in the barn.
- When it’s not snowing we are working on cutting back brush on rails to trails, and cutting trees with contractors.
- We are taking delivery of the new roadside mower soon. We are prepping the roadside to get ready with removal of rocks, stumps, etc.

Public Schools – Lenny Bragdon: We continue to work on security enhancements.

Police Department – Mark Palmer:
- Chief Palmer went to a Town Council meeting to talk about the PREA grant, which provides $30,000 for detainee safety in the lock-up area. The grant provides equipment upgrades and training, as well as an audit of the lock-up facility.
- The department is inundated with press inquiries for myriad issues. It has become a time management issue. The press is seeking some details on cases that can’t be shared yet.
- We had a meeting regarding the police vs. fire annual softball game. There were some good ideas. One of the thoughts about a prize was to wash a truck or car of the opposing team. We may also make it a fundraiser for Human Services or some other group. John recommended the summer camp because rates will have to go up due to minimum wage increase. The event will take place on May 16th at 10 AM on the middle school softball field.
- There was a falling accident at a resident’s home. Unfortunately, the victim has died
- We made an arrest for sexual assault yesterday. A press release will be distributed today.
- We had a meeting about a potential grant that would fund most of the cost of a school resource officer for three years. We are not eligible because we would have to sign an affidavit allowing ICE access to detaining facilities and provide notice prior to release. State law prohibits that. This stipulation may also affect some of our other grant funding opportunities in the future.

Fire/EMS/EMD – Jim McLoughlin (reported by John Elsesser):
- Jim is out sick today, but submitted a written report. Highlights are below.
- New communications tactical channels were initiated on 2/1/2020. All radios have been reprogrammed and the conversion to one “in-vehicle” repeater has been accomplished.
- A radio subcommittee for town-wide communications, including the schools, is scheduled for 2/12/2020 at 1 PM. Subcommittee to include EMD, Fire-EMS, Police, and Schools. This is different than item #6 on today’s agenda (radio communication with police, fire and future public works). Discussion topics: interagency communications including the schools in time of crisis. This subcommittee formed from the Workers Health & Safety Committee quarterly meeting.
- P.O.’s were submitted for new fire gear/PPE.
- Four vendors have looked at ET 308 – awaiting quotes.
- Attended training from COST (Emergency Management workshop) and CIRMA (Sexual Harassment training, and the Annual Member Meeting in Hartford) as well as participated in online webinars.
• Met with the Paramedic Advisory Committee, discussed routine business with our neighboring departments.
• Attended the DEMHS Region 4 steering committee meeting in Colchester.
• Attended the Tolland County Annual Meeting in Mansfield. Presentations by the State Police on the Tactical Emergency Critical Care teams and LIFESTAR.
• Budget talks with fire departments were held with the Town Manager and Finance Director.
• Station maintenance issues addressed as they arise.
• Quarterly report provided for publication.

Town Manager – John Elsesser:
• We had a meeting with TN to talk about issues with town wide radio. They would like to revamp our whole radio tower inside - get all the old equipment that’s not being used out, adding air conditioning instead of exhaust fans, etc. at their expense. While there they would repurpose some of the equipment for TN purposes. We told them to put a concept in writing but we are in agreement conceptually that they can take over the management of this equipment. They also are starting to have dialogue with appropriate people at the State Police to allow communications through TN that would bridge the fire to police issue. When we get public works radios in we could cross-band and get on the system. We have had problems with Fluid Mesh to get an antenna to public works and they will take care of that too. We have been having ongoing issues with the way public works gets internet. There are wide fluctuations – and it could be a number of causes. We would like to get the new antennas up. Getting fiber there is extremely expensive and there is no cable there, so that alternative is not available.
• The Board of Education applied for some E-rate money and got assistance for running new fiber. They are using a company called Wan Rack. This may start as early as March. They will be micro-boring in the CTDOT right of way from the Grammar School to Robertson School. DOT is expected to issue a permit. Call Before You Dig is going to be critical. The Board will be looking to fund about $80,000 in the capital budget. We are on a month-to-month contract with Charter now. This would be about the same price for five years and then the price drops. It would give us links to Patriots Park and a tie near the public works garage. It will be an interesting project.
• The parking lot at CGS will be in construction this summer, probably for the whole summer. The project will be out to bid soon.
• A primary is coming up in the schools. Robertson is not a big deal because the gym can be isolated. The Grammar School will be more complicated. Mark Palmer noted that there will be police presence at both sites.
• Corona Virus: The local Health Dept. and State Health Dept. are monitoring this issue closely. They are starting a campaign about hand-washing. With UConn here we should not rule out that it will arrive in our area. There is a travel ban to China – the high school canceled their trip.
• Another summer camp fundraiser will take place the weekend after Memorial Day. Human Services and Recreation will have a lake festival. They will be asking for participation, including a possible demo of the fire boat, games, inflatables, etc. Plans will ramp up faster when the Valentines dance is over.
• We are meeting with CTDOT and LOTCIP next week to discuss issues with new requirements for the signal light at Swamp and Rt. 44. We could lose a construction season over it so we are hoping it can be resolved. Plan B may be to go ahead with construction of the intersection and leave it closed until the signal is installed. We are also having a discussion on the Northfield intersection - they did not like our plan and
want a more dramatic turn. Our plan was better for emergency vehicles so we have proposed an alternative. We might consider looking at zoning in response to a request to change a property in that area to commercial. We are working on replacing the catch basins.

- Folly Lane Bridge: All permits are nearly in place – we will be out to bid in late February with construction in early June. We have to take down six trees and confirm there are no bat nests. There is an issue of delivery of golf carts with a tractor trailer vehicle, which is being resolved.

6. **Radio Communications with Police & Fire and Future Public Works:**
   John Elsesser said we are going to let TN take the lead and get us a plan in writing. We need to get a hold of J&S and get a plan in place for car conversions. Jim McLoughlin is requesting as we move forward with the transition to the State radio system, that we add radios for the Emergency Management Division, most likely two mobiles and two portables.

7. **Fire Transition Study Committee – Progress Report:**
   (Written report submitted by Jim McLoughlin): The Town Council approved the phase 1 report and has authorized the team to move into phase 2: consisting of final job descriptions, prioritizing expenses that will result from a merged state, and the implementation of the phase 1 recommendations. We anticipate an interim slate of officers to be appointed no later than July 1, 2020 with permanent officers to be filled by July 1, 2021. The next Transition Study Committee meeting will be held on 2/13/2020.

8. **Discussion/Needs of Public Safety and Emergency Services in Consideration of Changes to or Elimination of Ordinance for Public Assembly:**
   Julie Blanchard noted that a resident came in to request changes or elimination of this ordinance. The Council has talked about it at Steering but wanted this committee’s take. John Elsesser said that at a Council meeting a citizen requested eliminating it but has since submitted some modifications such as eliminating the fee. Mark Palmer emphasized the importance of this ordinance. Several years ago there was a property that was being rented every weekend for weddings, music festivals. Etc. There were complaints from neighbors for noise, traffic, etc. If we have previous knowledge of a large event we can help regulate certain elements, such as safe installation of tents, generators, etc. through inspection. He thinks it is important to keep the ordinance, but maybe we can make some changes to make it more palatable. The above-mentioned complaints are the only ones we are aware of so far. Julie said she can understand it at a certain level. Maybe the person wants to hold a rally and has no idea how many people might show up. John said one of the things we discussed at Steering was to have some pre-determined locations where an event can be safely held without causing traffic hazards, that offer adequate parking, and give us the ability to enforce if 500 people show up. We don’t think the ordinance is trying to stifle free speech or the right to assemble but we are a small town and need to know so we can provide police protection, traffic control, sanitation, etc. A permit is needed so we can plan. The process to change would be: Steering would make recommendations to the full Council, the Council would send it to a public hearing and then there is a vote. Mark Palmer suggested that perhaps the Council could put language in that indicates the permit is not intended to restrict rights that are protected by the Constitution but rather for public safety purposes. John said a large event with disparate groups could quickly become a major conflict requiring deployment of emergency response personnel, etc. There has to be some accountability, and if a legitimate organization, a certificate of insurance to protect us. Mark Palmer would even suggest lowering the amount of people to 150, as 300 people is a lot of people. Bud Meyers said he will take a closer look at the ordinance to see if he has any suggestions from a fire marshal standpoint. In his written report, Jim McLoughlin suggested adding the following: Section 66-62- #11(k) to include
Emergency Medical Technicians and Ambulance; and Section 66-65 – add payments for EMTs and a donation based on the fire service needs.

9. Other Business:
   Materials were distributed about the CCM annual Emergency Symposium.

10. Adjournment:
    The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 PM on a motion by Bud Meyers, seconded by Mark Palmer and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone