CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL:

By: Pacholski  Time: 6:08 p.m.  Place: Town Hall Annex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Absent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chuck Beecher</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ken Boutin</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ray Eldridge</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Craig Malan, Vice Chairperson</td>
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<td>James McLoughlin, Staff</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Pacholski, Chairperson</td>
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<td>Josh Ziel, Secretary</td>
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AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

Bud Meyers, 1238 Boston Turnpike – In speaking with the department some concerns were raised about the start date of the interim period being July 1. It was felt we are not at a place for an interim organization. There are going to be stipends and that has to be in this year’s budget. It was felt the job descriptions should be going out now so letters of interest can be submitted in order to get the process started. Steve did an exceptional job presenting to the Town Council. They may not realize the Fire Board has put a lot of policies in place for the town already. We can’t get too far ahead without the people getting involved.

Pacholski stated these concerns are valid. The Team had to present at the Council meeting before moving ahead. Now the Team is at the point where we can address these concerns. The job descriptions can be shared and Beecher actually laid them out on the conference table at the station. There is money built into the transition cost plan for such things as stipends. The whole purpose is to get the permanent state lined up with the next budget cycle.

McLoughlin suggested a joint meeting be held in the near future with the Board of Fire Officers (BFO) and the Fire Transition team. The Team can bring the merged vision and reason for decisions made to the BFO. Any questions from the BFO can be answered. There should be a discussion before then to consider letters of interest. Both groups can come together with the letters of interest in place and prepare to make a solid
recommendation to the Town Manager who can then approach the Town Council. This should be done sooner than later.

Pacholski suggested immediately following that meeting a joint presentation to the departments could be made. Beecher feels there would be a better response if you presented to the departments separately. While the vision is for a merged department there is some are not yet to the level of comfort as speaking before the entire group.

The Fire Board meeting is February 20, 2020. The Phase 1 presentation can be given and questions answered about how/why the qualifications were arrived at. Malan stated the Team does not have the appetite to change anything that has been decided; we will hear the concerns and convey what our thoughts were in making decisions.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Motion: The Fire Transition Study Committee approves the minutes of the January 9, 2020 meeting.

By: Malan        Seconded: McLoughlin

Motion carried with the following vote:
For: Ziel, Boutin, Malan, McLoughlin, Pacholski, Beecher
Against: None
Abstain: None

OLD BUSINESS:

a. PHASE 1 REPORT

The presentation on January 21, 2020 to the Town Council went well. Appreciation was expressed for the amount of work done to develop the report. Also appreciated was the collaborative nature from the Team and the departments. The Council did ask for a prioritization list of the financial costs from the Team’s perspective in preparation of trying to include some money for those in this year’s budget.

Malan feels those costs related to operational needs should be first. There is a legal obligation to relabel ambulances, but those are all set. Would we relabel Service 318 at this point in its lifespan? A couple of stickers on the doors is not going to be a great cost. Pacholski commented the Council did not ask for those costs that are related to operational items. The Council asked for a list and seemed to understand the importance of uniformity in clothing/gear. The awards ceremony at the beginning of the Council meeting was mentioned with the Chiefs in dress blues while the members were not. There has not been money to outfit everyone. We are creating a brand and new image with everyone wearing the same uniform.

McLoughlin reported one of the categories added to the capital budget is specifically for branding. The category was added and will be funded at the level the Council can approve. Not a single Council member blinked when the costs were mentioned. Most of
the Council members know that this merged department is a long time coming. McLoughlin feels the biggest key to the successful presentation was to provide the PowerPoint document to the Council members before the meeting so they could review the information beforehand.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Council Requests**

The request was for the Team to prioritize the costs listed. This should be on a high level.

Beecher assumes building access is getting done through the Town Manager’s initiative to have all municipal buildings on the same key entry system. Station 211 may have to be a combination lock because it does not have access to the system.

We have to decide on how to letter the trucks as there are two styles in use now. The tanker does not have anything on the door now. McLoughlin commented there may be one or two conflicts with the truck renumbering. If this occurs we could figure out which one is due to be replaced next and decide not to reletter that one.

It was felt Class B uniforms are a higher priority than relettering. This will give something to the people that are supporting us (the volunteers). Class B uniforms, job shirts, tee shirts, car plates and decals are priority one. That comes to ~$35,000.

McLoughlin wants to add helmet shields to the priority one list. This will create company or department pride as well as giving back to the volunteers. Those come to ~$3,000.

Has any thought or consideration been given to have the fire station signage being an Eagle Scout project. The Scouts can do some phenomenal work and part of the project is the scout gets funding for the project, although there is frequently some monetary component needed outside of their fundraising. Malan would personally like to see digital signs used. The two Main Street buildings have signs on the buildings themselves as well as the stand-alone sign. Where should this be on the priority list – priority two? The difference here is that it does not impact the individuals. Badge design should be discussed. Maybe we need a committee to design the badge. The Main Street stations signage would be priority two.

Class A uniforms, badges, and IDs should be part of priority one. McLoughlin reported Coventry has purchased a printer for printing IDs. By having five area towns come together to purchase one apiece, the system price was dropped. It is thought a representative from Town staff and one each from the north and south stations will be trained on how to use the system. A person’s rank should be on the ID badge.

Priority three would be relettering turnout gear and apparatus. Miscellaneous costs could be part of any of the priorities. Malan said there should be a standardization of the gear. McLoughlin reported the Fire Board has ordered six sets of gear, including belts, with the same specs that were agreed upon last time.
Pacholski will write up the priority list and send it to the Town Council. The Team would like priority one items within the first year.

b. Phase 2 Deliverables

Pacholski read the deliverables from the charge.

We don’t need to reinvent the wheel for call protocols. NCoV has five zones, Coventry has three. These may be combined to zones one through eight. Or it might be simplified town wide with dispatch protocols based on their geography. There could be tones for the north, tones for the south, and tones for EMS. There is no dispatch protocol for confined spaces. We provide support and EMS for the victims, but we don’t go into the hole. Some people had the training and have since left. Beecher’s department does not have the tripod. Confined spaces personnel will be from outside of the department. The development of a protocol for dispatching to include addressing the tone outs under one department, the confined spaces issue, different run cards by time of day, the addition of more mutual aid during the day. Chris is very good at looking at distances and has taken a lot of time to make changes to the run cards.

Malan stated it is outside of the scope to decide on apparatus placement. Capital for a new ET will be built into the 2022 budget. That will bring us to four ETs. Older equipment can be placed at stations that don’t go out as much.

Pacholski interprets this as how coverage is ensured.

Malan commented the Training subcommittee did not create job descriptions; they created minimum qualifications. These are the membership requirements. That is the concept of being a probationary member. The intent of the job descriptions was for officer positions.

c. Member Benefits

These discussion will include LOSAP, payment to juniors, the monthly EMS stipend, and the annual fire stipend. Going forward the Town is looking to double the LOSAP. There is the potential that it is underfunded at the current level. It can get very expensive very fast. A longer term minimum accrued service, such as five years, may be set before the stipend kicks in.

In regards to a tax abatement – the Town is willing to consider this. However, the shift coverage for the ambulance has 26-32 people signed up with only six to eight actually covering the calls. There should be a tie in to the organizational needs so this is a benefit to the organization and the member. People has noted where stipends are based on the response to calls. There are no points or reimbursement for shift coverage currently. The general feeling is that members do not want pay per shift. The problem is we don’t have the shifts covered. As a municipality coverage for these services is needed 24 x 7. A tax abatement can be part of the recruitment and retention.

McLoughlin recommends that points be at parity with LOSAP. In order to get reimbursed a member must be at 35, 10, 10 – that is, been on 35 calls, attended 10 meetings, and 10 events. This is a higher bar than has been paid out in the past two years.
Under the current situation a point is worth $10.69. The point value is going to jump to $15.00 per point. The awarding of points becomes a struggle when a meeting is held. For instance, 30 people are attending a meeting when a call comes in. Each of those people are getting credit for the meeting and credit for the call while only two people actually went on the call. While we are always on standby it is not fair to people who do the call that those sitting at the station are getting the same credit. It devalues the point value and takes away from the people actually doing the work. The Town does not want to drive volunteer people away.

If you are on an EMS call you are going to get paid. If you are on a service truck you get a point. This could be tough administratively – the EMS transporting to the hospital gets paid a stipend and the point without the monetary credit. The staffed crew will be providing the service; others can earn points by being available should another call come in while the crew is out. McLoughlin feels it is a shame that someone happened to be in the fire house when Ventec was called out so that person’s name appeared on the roster. That should not be awarded a point or credit. We are all on call.

We don’t have the authority to change this. The point policy says that if you respond to the station it allows you a point. This is to entice people being available for the next call. McLoughlin values the input and perspective about this from the people who live it. The point is really for getting to the call; the EMS stipend is for transporting to the hospital. Malan thinks it is few and far between to claim a point simply by being at the station. This is a couple of people dragging everyone else down. The Town’s concern is for day-to-day ambulance coverage.

McLoughlin feels it is not right to pay Junior firefighters. He equates it to Scouts going to meetings; they do not get paid for that. The money should be going to the people who are responding to calls. The monies go to support programs for Junior firefighters. The Juniors are there to learn about the fire departments. The incentives are for the people doing the business of the agency. The incentive of the Juniors is to come to learn. McLoughlin asked why we are giving 15- and 16-year olds stipend checks. Pacholski suggested a subcommittee is needed to look at Benefits. This topic is not specifically spelled out in the charge. The Board of Fire Officers will be batting this around in the form of a policy. Malan, Boutin, and McLoughlin will be the Benefits subcommittee members.

d. Interim Timeframe

McLoughlin stated this topic ties into the comments made during the audience of citizens section. The current plan is to have the interim year start July 1, 2020 with a one-year timeframe to get to the permanent organization. Did we take into consideration of making the interim term 18 months long with January 1, 2020 being the start of the permanent organization. This would tie into a calendar year cycle for the new LOSAP and new points.

Pacholski would like to keep the interim to a 12-month timeframe. He feels the Council was accepting of this. McLoughlin is more comfortable with the 12-month period also. From a timely standpoint we should be asking for letters of interest sooner than later.
Pacholski will present the PowerPoint document to the north end on February 24, 2020. He will ask that letters of interest be submitted to the Team. The same process will be done with CVFA. And Pacholski will meet with the Board of Fire Officers. Interest letters for the position of Chief should be submitted by the end of March. A person can indicate all officer levels they are interested in. The letter should include why you want the position, how you are qualified for the position, and what you will bring to the position.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

McLoughlin heard from Carolyn Arabolos that she had gone through the PowerPoint presentation. She commended the Team for the tremendous effort. She appreciates the work and interest each Member has brought to the committee. Arabolos asked McLoughlin to extend her gratitude to each and every one on the Team.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion:** I move to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

By: Malan Seconded: McLoughlin

Motion carried with the following vote:
For: Malan, Ziel, Pacholski, Boutin, McLoughlin, Beecher
Against: None
Abstain: None

Respectfully Submitted,

*Yvonne B. Filip*

Yvonne B. Filip, Recording Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Fire Transition Study Committee at the next Committee meeting. Please see the next Committee meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.