

Minutes
Local Emergency Coordination Committee
March 4, 2021
(Virtual meeting due to COVID-19 safety guidelines)

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM.
Present: John Elsesser, Laura Stone, Beth Mancini, Mark Palmer, Bud Meyers, Jim McLoughlin, Ted Opdenbrouw, Ken Boutin, Julie Blanchard, Bill Watkins
Also present: Connor Ratte, Event Organizer, Make-A-Wish Road Race
Absent: Matthew O'Brien, Jr.
2. **Audience of Citizens:** none.
3. **Coming Events:**
Mark Palmer introduced Connor Ratte, organizer of the Make-A-Wish 5k road race that is tentatively scheduled for March 20 at Laidlaw Park. The event was held in 2019, but canceled last year due to COVID. Connor has submitted a permit application, insurance certificate, and application fee, as well as a written plan for the event. Connor worked with Wendy Rubin, Director of Parks & Recreation, on the site selection.

Connor said the first year, the race was held at the high school, but they are not allowing outside events there this year. We considered the Hale Homestead but that did not work out. Laidlaw Park was our next best option. We plan to start and finish in the same spot in the driveway. He outlined the route for the committee. COVID plans are in place. A professional timing company will be there, and they are familiar with COVID protocols. They also did the Veterans Day Patriot Race.

Julie Blanchard asked if there is going to be a police or fire police presence, with the group running on the road. Mark Palmer said at the first year of the event, there was little traffic control and the runners blocked some of the road. The next year we met and two police officers were assigned to keep traffic moving. We have not met on traffic control this year, but may need an officer there – this road is not as heavily trafficked. Connor said he has spoken with Ray Oliver regarding getting volunteer fire police personnel to help.

Jim McLoughlin asked if the race will cause any access issues for the fire station. If the use of the driveway will prevent access, we may need to relocate the fire apparatus temporarily. Connor said the only issue would be the first or last parts of the race. The greater issue would be at the end as the runners finish. Jim said we can work with that, but if it will be a full road of people, it could be a potential problem. Connor said he is willing to work with him on that and make some small changes if necessary.

Mark Palmer noted that current COVID regulations do not allow same-day registration. Connor said he is aware of that and online registration will be cut off on the day of the race. We are picking up bibs and will have a table for the participants to pick them up the day before as well as that morning to reduce some of the crowd. Mark noted that they will have to stop registration the day before. Mark also said he has spoken with Connor regarding trash (water bottles, etc.) Connor said there will be no water stations or food on the course. We will try to get a couple of cases of water at the finish, and will have trash bags on hand. We will sweep the premises before packing up. Connor will bring the trash bags back to his home.

John Elsesser asked if there is a plan to notify the neighborhood about the event. Connor said not

really, but he is willing to do that. He is not sure how. Can the town do it? John said we have some means – through the police department and website alerts. He thinks it's important to let people know.

Mark Palmer moved and Bud Meyers seconded to approve the permit application based on today's discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. COVID-19 Update – Jim McLoughlin/John Elsesser:

- Jim said that the vaccine eligibility has been changed to age-based. EHHD is focusing on the education community.
- Testing is not being talked about much, but is abundantly available.
- Jim is able to procure PPE without restriction.
- The Governor is lifting some restrictions on March 19 (details attached to minutes).
- John said that the Health District was asked to expand the vaccine to preschools. They are trying to find staff.
- The State Vaccine Administration System (VAMS) is very hard to navigate right now with the new influx of eligible individuals. One thing that does work is getting up early and getting an appointment through CVS. He was able to get an appointment for Sunday. He expects that things will loosen up over the next week as we get more Johnson & Johnson vaccines and the initial surge lightens up.
- John talked with Manny Rodrigues about the Memorial Day Parade and gave to go-ahead to start planning for it in a reduced capacity. There will probably not be a CoventryFest/fireworks event in June – the organizers are talking about trying to do an alternative event at the end of summer.
- Town Hall continues at the same level of services. We are still urging people to use remote services.
- We are below 3% positivity as a state. The numbers are climbing a little bit. The next concern is spring break and people traveling, but we think we are doing pretty well.

Agency updates:

Fire/EMS/Emergency Management – Jim McLoughlin:

- The Fire Department has converted the fire alarm system to a private company.
- The key fob conversion project is complete.
- Rescue 418 is at the vendor getting lights and graphics.
- Jim and Bud will present the department's proposed budget to the Town Council on March 8.
- We are at the four-year mark of the Town managing the ambulance.
- Jim continues to participate in meetings with the Department of Homeland Security.
- The FD may participate in a Sunday night softball league.

Coventry Public Schools – Ted Opdenbrouw:

- We got six large concrete bollards through a grant. They look like flowerpots. They deter vehicle traffic from striking pedestrians. We will place two at CGS, one at the preschool, and three at GHR. They will be planted with flowers this spring.
- GHR has four large propane tanks that have been identified as potential hazards. DPW came up with two boulders to help secure them.
- We have new main entrance signs to help visitors and first responders.
- During a fire drill last month, we identified a door at the high school that is not functioning properly. It has been fixed.
- We are adding cameras to some schools to address blind spots.

- We are applying for another security grant – if we get it, we will get more cameras.

Police Department – Mark Palmer:

- One of the new vehicles is finally ready. The design change required some new equipment.
- All staff that chose to receive it have been vaccinated.
- Fingerprinting services are back to normal.
- Loren Santiago is doing well with the training process. He is doing some handgun training. The Academy may return to in-person sessions in late March. Nathan Provost finished his field training and will be on his own soon.
- We had a problem with one of the pumps in the heating system at the station. More diagnostics are pending but we have heat in the building.

Public Works – Bill Watkins:

- As spring comes, more DPW presence will be on the roads with street sweeping, edging, etc. We will advise of any road closures. Sweeping will start in the lake communities – our goal is to do every street in town. John noted we always start in the lake area to reduce runoff.

Fire Chief – Bud Meyers:

- During the month of February we responded to 77 calls (see detailed stats in report attached to minutes).
- R418 replacement is at the shop having lights and graphics installed. We are looking at May for its return.
- We are in the process of re-patching Class “A” jacket.
- Overhead doors at Station 218 have been repaired and all doors are working.
- We continue to be on COVID lockdown, allowing only members and Vintech use of the stations.
- Chief Figiela and Chief Mancini-Goldsneider are COVID-19 vaccination instructors, and we have six members certified to administer the vaccine.
- Lt. Jim Galey is our newest certified Fire Service Instructor 1.
- Training Coordinator Cory Lachance is our newest certified Fire Instructor 2.
- Firefighter Zach Laskey has completed and been certified as a Firefighter 1, and to Hazardous Materials Operational Level.
- Five members completed 24 hours of an officer development class.

Administration – Laura Stone:

- Articles for the spring newsletter are due by Friday.

Town Manager – John Elsesser:

- The Manager’s Budget Hearing is next Thursday.
- The Red Suburban is being reallocated to fire police.
- Door locks at Town Hall have been upgraded.
- The ambulance proposal for this year’s budget – we can take the body and put on a different chassis, which will save \$100,000. We may want to accelerate the purchase of the chassis. It will be good to get a replacement for a vehicle that has been causing problems.
- We are planning an internal staff meeting to tighten protocols for communicating road closures. We need to figure out a routine approach.

- Next month we will invite organizers in for the Veterans Day Patriot Race. We receive the permit application today.
5. **Fire Transition Study Committee:** Jim McLoughlin said the committee met last month and reviewed the process for permanent officers beginning July 1. We are looking at contracts for the Associations and will continue to meet until it is time to make a recommendation to disband. Bud Meyers said that Steve Pacholski will be sending notices out to submit a letter of intent and resume if interested in the permanent position.
 6. **Other Business:** Jim McLoughlin said that Eversource has developed an online reporting portal in the event of a storm. They were looking for one point of email contact. We have created the email storm@coventryct.org, which forwards to a group that includes key staff.
 7. **Adjournment:**
The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 PM on a motion by Bud Meyers, seconded by Ted Opdenbrouw and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone