Minutes
Local Emergency Coordination Committee
August 6, 2020
(Virtual meeting due to COVID-19 safety guidelines)

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:06 PM.


3. Acceptance of Minutes: A quorum was not present, so no actions were taken to approve the previous meeting minutes.

4. COVID-19 Update:
   John Elsesser indicated that the re-opening of Town Hall has been successful. Anticipated large numbers of people wanting to pay their taxes in person did not occur; people are paying by other means. Cleaning protocols do have an impact on staff time and workload.

5. Agency updates:

   Police Department – Mark Palmer:
   - We conducted entry-level interviews for open job positions. The top three candidates will get follow up. The Academy was supposed to start on 10/9 but will now start 9/11 – that is a tight timetable to have a candidate ready. The next class is not until January.
   - Chief Palmer has comments regarding the police accountability bill and will share them when that matter is discussed.

   North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department – Bud Meyers:
   - We had 88 calls during the previous month and got the second ambulance on six of those calls. Vintech has been very helpful.
   - Training continues with COVID guidelines in place.
   - We are doing fit testing.
   - The truck went out for a recall and it will take about a week. The ET is being refurbished.

   Fire/EMS/Emergency Management – Jim McLoughlin:
   - We did a walk-through of the Library prior to their re-opening to make sure the necessary COVID precautions are in place. They have a solid plan.
   - We are working on new equipment purchases and installation.
   - Re-signing of the apparatus for Department 18 is complete.
   - The Farmers’ Market is ongoing and it is going well with Fire Police.
   - Drive-by parades have ended. We did 131 total.
   - We switched over to the new pagers on July 1.
   - Storm Isaias: An online tracking form is in place for downed trees, blocked roads and downed wires for emergency responder use during natural disaster events. We have some disagreements with Eversource on classification of priority levels. Eversource now wants a list of places where we would want to park someone for safety reasons. That will take some time. Jim and Mark Palmer gave kudos to Mike Cote for the development of the tracking form. Bud Meyers noted that many residents are taking it upon themselves to do removal of trees with downed wires. That could be lethal. John Elsesser said that we saw on Facebook that Eversource is responding to the pump station transformer issue on Shore Drive. Laura
Stone noted that communication initiatives for the storm included web alerts and updates on the Town Manager’s Facebook page.

**Town Manager – John Elsesser:**
Work on the Folly Lane Bridge replacement is supposed to start next week, but we can’t do the detour until downed trees and wires are removed. The project is on a tight timetable, so Eversource delays could be catastrophic. Jim McLoughlin said a call to Mike Caplet might help – it seemed to work with the transformer issue.

6. **Events:**
John Elsesser noted that the annual Steeplechase event has been scaled back and will no longer come through our town.

7. **Radio communications/police, fire, public works:**
Jim McLoughlin reported we are pushing to get the public works radios ordered. He wants to add emergency operations to the system. Once public works goes on the state system we want to use their UF frequencies for other purposes. Mark Palmer noted that those frequencies are registered through the FCC and could be hard to come by, so we should keep those frequencies registered with the Town.

8. **Fire Transition Study Committee Update:**
Jim McLoughlin said that the committee met last week and worked on job descriptions for supportive personnel. We also continue to work through policy updates. A sub-committee is working on incentive policies.

9. **Public Gathering Ordinance:**
John Elsesser noted that the Town Council Steering Committee made some changes, but this item was tabled at the last Council meeting after some harsh criticism from a citizen. Mark Palmer made several suggested revisions:
- Sec. 66-63: First line: “Coventry Police shall” – add “Chief” before shall.
- Third line: Approval of the application or issuance of license is typically the purview of the Town Manager unless this change was intentional.
- The use of “he” and “him” should be changed to be gender-neutral throughout the document.
- “Moral turpitude” is somewhat nebulous and wide-ranging.
- With the change in age from 21 to 18, alcohol is still mentioned, so we will have to make sure no alcohol is involved at events organized by under-age individuals.

**Police Accountability Bill:**
Mark Palmer noted this bill significantly changes how departments would operate. There are a number of unfunded mandates. A meeting with the CT Chiefs and Post Council is pending. The change in qualified immunity law is significant – guidance is due out regarding how municipalities will cover it – we think CIRMA should weigh in. Insurance coverage may be difficult to get. We think a number of legislators realize the bill has flaws and some items may change, but probably not the qualified immunity issue.

10. **Adjournment:**
The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 PM on a motion by Bud Meyers, seconded by Mark Palmer and unanimously approved.
Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone