

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday January 8, 2020
Yantic Volunteer Fire Department
151 Yantic Road, Yantic
7:00 PM

Committee Members Present: Alderman Mark Bettencourt and Alderman Joseph A. DeLucia.

Committee Members Absent: Alderman William Nash

Administration and Staff Present: Mayor Peter Nystrom and Alderwoman Stacy Gould, City of Norwich; Captain Jim Veiga, Norwich Police Department and Eric McDermott, Norwich Public Utilities.

Volunteer/Central Fire Departments and Others: Taftville Chief Timothy Jencks and Assistant Chief William Hadam; Norwich Battalion Chief Marc Benjamin and Kyle Seitz; East Great Plain Chief Keith Milton; Occum Chief Carroll Spaulding and Scott Eggert; Laurel Hill: Chief Aaron Westervelt, Andrew Daigle, Pete Clark and Michael Carlos; and Yantic Chief Frank Blanchard, Captain Chris Colonial, Craig Maerkel, Adam Herz, James Tramontozzi, Brian Huggard, Melanie Moon, Frank Cilley, William Hayes and Ken Leo.

Citizens Present: Gregory Schlough

I. **Call to Order and Quorum:** Alderman DeLucia called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. There was a quorum present.

II. **Approval of Minutes: Minutes of Wednesday November 13, 2019**

Alderman Bettencourt motioned, seconded by Alderman DeLucia, to approve the Wednesday November 13, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

III. **Nominations and Election of Chair:**

Motion by Alderman DeLucia, seconded by Alderman Mark Bettencourt to go out of agenda order. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Alderman Bettencourt, seconded by Alderman DeLucia to move Nominations and Election of Chair to the third item under the Approval of Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Alderman Bettencourt, seconded by Alderman DeLucia, to nominate Alderman Joe DeLucia as the Public Safety Committee Chairman. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. **Correspondence:** None.

V. **Citizen Comment:** Gregory Schlough. 91 Lambert Drive, Norwich, questioned why Public Works is not an active part of the Public Safety Commission meetings as they are an integral part of public safety and transportation. Alderman DeLucia noted that he is part of the Public Works Committee and took it upon himself to communicate items between the standing council committees so that all have a clear picture of what occurs within the City.

VI. **Old Business:**

Apparatus/ Equipment Financing: Chief Blanchard presented an invoice for Yantic Fire Department on behalf of the comptroller who asked that it be incorporated into the minutes for approval on final payment including items added to the pumper during final inspection. Chief Timothy Jencks also presented an invoice for Taftville Fire Department regarding similar items, also requested by the comptroller to be incorporated into the minutes, of things added to the pumper during final inspection.

Motion by Alderman Joe DeLucia to approve invoice 338183TR-A YANTIC in reference to Yantic Volunteer Fire Department's 2020 Pierce Pumper options added in the final inspection. Alderman Mark Bettencourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Alderman Joe DeLucia to approve invoice 338183TR-A TAFTVILLE in reference to Taftville Volunteer Fire Department's 2020 Pierce Pumper options added in the final inspection. Alderman Mark Bettencourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Aaron Westervelt reported the final inspection for Laurel Hill would be in Mississippi the 28th - 30th of the month which should be the final step and delivery should be the first week in February. Chief Timothy Jencks of Taftville stated their rescue truck is still looking at a mid-March delivery date and is under construction currently. Chief Keith Milton of East Great Plains stated their cabin chases is completed and is expected to go out for final inspection mid-March.

VII. **New Business:**

- a. **Norwich Public Utilities Update:** Eric McDermott reported no updates and invited all to a public tour at the Water Plan Electric Sub Station the upcoming Saturday.
- b. **Emergency Management:** Chief Marc Benjamin stated Chief Keith Wucik was unable to attend but sent an electronic report to the Committee stating:
 - No weather events but did open warmer centers from December 19th to 21st.
 - Attending the following:
Statewide EPPI (Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative) tabletop exercise, Incident Command Emergency Management Training, Quarterly Radiological Millstone meeting, Training for new WebEOC8.7, attended ESF (Emergency Support Function) Committee meetings.
- c. **American Ambulance:** Robert Rautio introduced himself as the newly appointed Director of Operations and provided a brief synopsis of their service for the City for 2019 including 8,936 calls for service including 6,614 actual transports to various facilities in the area. Robert Rautio stated the cost to the city comes to \$7.95 per service.
- d. **Norwich Police Department:** Captain Jim Veiga reported 167 arrests for the past month, 149 accidents and two recruits currently in the academy expected to graduate later in the month and at the end of May. Captain Veiga stated earlier that day NPD swore in their three newest recruits which puts them at a full capacity of 88 members. Captain Veiga reported the WatchGuard system that the Committee approved the past spring is in full operation including body and cruiser cameras which has been well received by the officers. Alderman DeLucia asked if there was any update on the radio system to which Captain Veiga responded the project is being handled by Lieutenant Perry but to his knowledge concrete was poured in the last week and all portables have been programed so he believe beginning or mid-February things should be running off of just the portables. Captain Veiga stated NPD is still waiting on the base station to arrive but coverage has already improved to 98% coverage from the portables alone.
- e. **Firehouse Status Updates:**
 - Taftville:** Chief Timothy Jencks reported for the 2019 year 797 calls

for service, 499 EMS calls, 290 fire calls and 68 calls where Taftville provided mutual aid services along as well as receiving mutual aid 13 times. Chief Jencks added four members completed Fire 1 and five completed EMS class in 2019 and reported approximately 4,100 training hours and 2,800 call hours overall. Chief Jencks stated the LUCAS device that had been funded in July 2019 was used on 6 of 12 cardiac arrests calls and all 6 patients arrived at the hospital with a pulse. Chief Timothy Jencks reported the firehouse parking lot still remains an issue.

East Great Plain: Chief Keith Milton reported 77 calls for the past month with 877 for the year overall and approximately 9 members whom completed EMR along with approximately 11 whom completed FIRE 1 and FIRE 2 courses in 2019. Chief Milton reported routine maintenance on the apparatuses and that the new ladder truck is progressing as he was recently updated that it is on its way to the fabrication shop and he is hoping for a return date the end of next month. Chief Milton stated two significant firehouse needs include the deteriorating and sinking parking lot along with heating and air conditioning upgrades.

Occum: Chief Carroll Spaulding stated Occum's membership is up to 36 with another interview planned for that evening and 21 calls for the month of December. Chief Spaulding stated Occum is out of fundraiser money and will need to allocate from other areas to cover the expenses as their funds depleted from four members in the process of completing EMT training with another enrolling as well as a member enrolling into instructor school. Alderman Bettencourt questioned if the request budget the previous year had been increased or diminished to which Chief Carroll responded that it had not been his budget. Mayor Peter Nystrom commented that City Council had approved a budget increase the past year. Alderman DeLucia asked if the funds spent on training included the increased dollar amount that had been approved by the council after the last budget season ended to which Chief Spaulding answered it had.

Yantic: Chief Frank Blanchard reported membership is currently at 58 and all apparatuses in service aside from Squad 36 which is currently at the city garage for a battery issue. Chief Blanchard stated Fire Marshall Abatement Phase 1 is complete with Phase 2 beginning in about a week however the firehouse is still in need of funding for

Phase 3 as well as an HVAC installation on the main floor, removal of the underground oil tank, paving of the parking lot and expansion of the main annex by two garage bays. Chief Blanchard reported 681 calls for service in 2019 with an increase of provided mutual aid by 6 ½ percent and overall total man hours, including drills and service, at approximately 12,000. Chief Blanchard wished to notify the Committee that the personnel committee appointment by the volunteer departments is working with the City Comptroller to update the tax abatement project for volunteer firefighters. Chief Blanchard also reported they are working through the pension committee to develop language and statistics to present to the Public Safety Committee in the future. Chief Blanchard added there is an upcoming project planned for the Sunnyside Bridge in Yantic which will limit access to the firehouse for four-hour windows at the minimum so he felt it may be prudent to place an apparatus on the opposite side of the bridge that can be accessed during construction, on a temporary basis. Alderman Bettencourt asked if there were any orders from DEEP on replacing the underground oil tank. Chief Blanchard responded not at this time but expects to receive them in the near future as the tank has already expired its useful life and there is not yet any plans designed to move it.

Laurel Hill: Chief Aaron Westervelt reported Laurel Hill's budget had been submitted and he would be meeting with the City Manager in the next week to start the process. Chief Westervelt reported Laurel Hill is currently making preparations and developing training for the new truck that is arriving. Chief Westervelt stated they are currently at 34 active members with some in the interview process and trained 7 EMRs in 2019 as well as 4 firefighters which somewhat depleted their training funds. Chief Westervelt stated the new firehouse exhaust system and dehumidifier is working well.

Norwich: Chief Keith Wucik sent an electronic report to the Committee stating:

- Staffing: One firefighter completed CT Fire Academy and is now assigned to a shift.
- Responses: The department responded to a total of 375 incidents since November 14th meeting. 105 fire and 270 EMS with 85 (22.67%) overlapping where there were multiple incidents responded to at the same time. Mutual Aid was given

10 times, no mutual aid was received. The average apparatus response time on all calls was 3:18 (which includes an average turnout time for fully staffed apparatus).
(See Emergency Reporting Doc ID #1645).

- **Equipment:** Marine 1 will be in service, in water through winter unless removed for a severe weather threat.
- **Critical Needs:** Replacement of Squad A.
- **Other Updates:** Updated alarm cards for incidents within City of Norwich FD limits are set to go into effect this week.

VIII. **Other:**

- a. **Updated Fire Report Deadline:** City Manager John Salomone was not in attendance to report.
- b. **IMC Bridge:** City Manager John Salomone was not in attendance to report.
- c. **Radios for Fire Trucks:** Alderman DeLucia asked what options were available for a long-term solution for the departments that would be fiscally and operationally sound. Chief Frank Blanchard explained the challenges the departments face to have system that can communicate properly within the City as well as with neighboring towns that have not updated their radios or changed bandwidths. Chief Blanchard added that Chief Patrick Daly recommended in regards to the State radio system to allow time for NPD to test the system out before making decisions for the firehouses. Chief Blanchard continued that while a certain grade of radio may be able to be recommended it would be hard to recommend one system that would work cohesively as it is a regional issue that would need to be resolved by a council of governments. Chief Timothy Jencks added there are many dispatches centers in New London County. Chief Aaron Westervelt added an additional issue is in the past low band radios had many distributors but now it is down to just Kenwood and the prices have greatly increased.
- d. **Firefighter ID system:** Alderman DeLucia stated he didn't feel it was a function of the Committee to instruct chiefs on how to track members on site however did feel the departments should work towards standardization. Chief Frank Blanchard stated all departments utilize some form of accountability system but this item arose last month from Chief Keith Wucik due to a miscommunication so he had wished to share

what system the city utilizes. Chief Blanchard stated Yantic firehouse is planning to migrate toward the City's electronic passport system while still maintaining the Salamander system to use within the region. Chief Marc Benjamin added the goal would be to get all departments on a system that can be used comfortably and consistently.

IX. **Future Agenda Items:**

- Updated Fire Report Deadline
- IMC Bridge
- Radios for Fire Trucks
- Yantic Firehouse Underground Oil Tank

X. **Adjournment:** Upon a motion by Alderman Bettencourt seconded by Alderman DeLucia, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:57 pm

*Respectfully Submitted,
Katherine Rose*