

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting via ZOOM App**  
**Wednesday September 9, 2020**  
**7:00 PM**

**Committee Members Present:** Alderman Joseph DeLucia, Alderman William Nash and Alderman Mark Bettencourt.

**Committee Members Absent:** None.

**Administration and Staff Present:** City Manager John Salomone, City of Norwich; Eric McDermott, Norwich Public Utilities; Robert Rautio, American Ambulance; and Chief Patrick Daly, Norwich Police Department.

**Volunteer/Central Fire Departments and Others:** Norwich Chief Tracy Montoya; East Great Plain: Chief Keith Milton; and Yantic Chief Frank Blanchard.

**Citizens Present:** Alderwoman Stacy Gould.

- I. **Call to Order and Quorum:** Alderman DeLucia called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. There was a quorum present.
- II. **Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Alderman Bettencourt made a motion to approve the previous minutes as amended Alderman Nash seconded. Alderman DeLucia noted that under the Norwich Fire Department update Chief Milton should state Chie Merchant and under item G it should read “2,000 dollars over two years.” All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Citizen Comment: *Note - the citizen comment occurred after the City Manager Update due to connection issues***  
Alderwoman Stacy Gould stated she was pleased to hear a favorable recommendation for the Volunteer Fire Department Tax Abatement and hoped the ordinance would pass at the September 22nd City Council Meeting. Alderwoman Gould stated she would like to see the ordinance to include language from Public Act 19-36 for retired volunteer firefighters to be able to take advantage of the abatement in the future, within a reasonable time period. Alderman DeLucia asked if Alderwoman Gould would like to add the discussion of the language to a future Public Safety agenda item. Alderwoman Gould stated that she would and hopefully by October 14th the ordinance would be passed with a caveat of who can access the abatement.
- IV. **Old Business:**
  - a. **COVID-19 Resurgence Impacts:** Alderman DeLucia commented on

the situation at the Laurel Hill retirement home. Rob Raudio of American Ambulance stated they had felt a significant impact from the resurgence of impact and noted that the AA staff as well as the rest of the public safety members that respond to the Three Rivers Health Care Center have taken heightened safety steps in their response to the site. Robert Rautio stated that the Department of Health had also been heavily involved with the facility. Alderman DeLucia asked if the recent outbreak incidents called for any changes in local responses. Robert Rautio responded AA has a very good relation with the Norwich fire departments and that the current outbreak to the public safety complex is low but all departments should prepare for the worst case situation.

V. **New Business:**

- a. **Discussion and Possible Action – 2021 Public Safety Meeting Dates:** Alderman Nash made a motion to accept the 2021 meeting schedule. Alderman Bettencourt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Discussion and Possible Action – Increasing the Volunteer Firefighter Tax Abatement:** Alderman DeLucia reported that at the City Council meeting which occurred the night before the first reading ordinance of the Volunteer Firefighter Tax Abatement was taken and referred to the Public Safety Committee. Alderman DeLucia stated he was given an official action referral to present to the Public Safety Committee. Alderman Bettencourt made a motion that the Public Safety Committee make a favorable recommendation to Council to adopt the ordinance to increase the Volunteer Firefighter Tax Abatement by \$500 in the first year and to \$2,000 by the second year. Alderman Nash seconded. Alderman Bettencourt stated the Committee wishes to support volunteer companies in search of maintenance and membership which was a primary goal of the abatement. Alderman Bettencourt stated when he had spoken to the Mayor regarding the structure of the ordinance for first submittal they did not expand the program as it was brought to their attention that if the ordinance is resubmitted it would run into the next grand list so it was decided to be in the best interest to get the existing ordinance submitted and then to review the program in the future. Alderman Bettencourt continued that based on his discussion with the Mayor they did not feel the current uncertain times proved best for expanding the program immediately while they want to recognize those in service currently, as well as retirees, the program could not be expanded at this time but would be revisited in the future. Alderman DeLucia stated the options for the tax abatement program under the new legislation were to expand or increase

benefits and as the ordinance stands the benefits would be increased. Alderman DeLucia reported that currently at the 1,000 dollar abatement level there is a cost to the City of 67,000 dollars; at phase one of the ordinance with the abatement level at 1,500 the cost to the City would be 94,000 dollars; and when the increase reaches 2,000 in the second phase the cost to the City would be 121,000 dollars. Alderman DeLucia noted that even at the 27,000 increase in the first year and 54,000 increase in the second year there was enmourse cost effectiveness. All voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

c. **Department Updates:**

i. **NPU Update:** Eric McDermott reported NPU remains at phase 2 of their return to work plan and are continuing to monitor pandemic state and federal guidelines. Eric McDermott stated NPU would be participating with Yale's study of waste water to determine how we may be able to monitor pandemic or future outbreaks from wastewater. Eric McDermott reported that reservoirs were currently at 82 percent capacity and if there were no decreases in rainfall NPU would restart hydrant flushing the following week. Eric McDermott stated NPU had taken a break with school reopening. Eric McDermott stated that NPU is preparing for the new business park pressure reducing station on New Park Avenue which would feed into the new mains in Franklin and that NPU would be testing all associated hydrants in the area. Alderman DeLucia asked what the status of the Franklin project was. Eric McDermott responded the project was going very well and should be live the following week.

ii. **American Ambulance** Robert Rautio reported 793 calls for the month and noted that emergency calls were up for the first time this entire year. Robert Rautio stated for the past four years the trend had shown an increase of calls in August, however each month this year had shown a decrease in calls. Robert Rautio reported that AA is at full staff with no members sick for any reason and that they are continuing to monitor return to work for the last of the vacationers. Robert Rautio stated AA is taking additional precautions in regards to patients being transported from the Three Rivers Health Care facility. Robert Rautio stated that AA was still well situated with PPE and that they began reporting to CARES database for all cardiac arrest responses to be able to help nationally track cardiac response and survival rates.

iii. **Police Department Update:** Chief Patrick Daley reported that

three new, very motivated hires were sworn in that day and four officers were currently working through the FTO process and should be going on their own within a month. Chief Daly reported two fatal motorcycle accidents had occurred the past month making five fatal accidents for the year. Chief Daly stated NPD had no current COVID issues or outages but they were still monitoring the situation closely. Chief Daly commended Chief Wucik for his work during Chief Montoya's absence and welcomed Chief Montoya back. Alderman DeLucia stated he had not received any more emails in regards to the Greenville traffic issue and hoped it was due to increased police enforcement. Chief Daly responded that NPD had increased vehicle presence and that day officers went through all hot spots in the City. Chief Daly stated NPD has been monitoring Prospect Street as well and noted public works has considered putting a stop sign at the Prospect and Hickory Street intersection.

iv. **Emergency Management Update:** Chief Tracy Montoya reported a new shipment of PPE was received as well as new dosimeters. Chief Montoya stated he has continued monitoring governors ongoing instructions and noted that some EO's from governors were extended until November 9th based on new testing and potential vaccines coming out.

v. **Fire Department Updates:**

- **Norwich:** Chief Tracy Montoya reported 221 calls for the month including 73 fire, 143 EMS and 68 overlapping calls with the average on-scene time being three minutes, five seconds. Chief Montoya stated mutual aid was provided three times. Chief Montoya stated at the end of August AFG held a presentation at Engine 2 with Governor Blumenthal and Mayor Nystrom in attendance which was a big win for the City and thanked Jason Balletto for his efforts on the project. Chief Montoya stated the grant award totaled 213,000 dollars, 194,00 dollars from the grant directly and 19,000 from the City, which would cover educational training and new equipment. Chief Montoya stated critical needs included Squad A and noted vacancies in staffing. Chief Montoya reported that no members were out due to COVID and that the contract for the fire house windows was awarded the past week so the project should be moving forward soon.

- **Taftville:** Alderman Bettencourt received communication from Chief Timothy Jencks that Taftville received its Rescue truck and

are waiting on Prokop Signs to complete lettering. Chief Jencks stated he hoped to have the truck in service by the end of the month however there could be delays depending on the vendors for the radio and pump. Alderman Bettencourt added that Taftville would be receiving a citation at the county chief's meeting for the rescue they performed in Jewett City.

- **Yantic:** Chief Frank Blanchard reported 62 calls for the past month and that all apparatus were currently in service. Chief Blanchard stated training was ongoing and that Yantic was currently in the punch-list phase of the Fire Marshal abatement at the station and were hoping to have the City inspections done within the next two weeks. Chief Blanchard stated that the Sunnyside Bridge Project, being conducted by Mattern Construction, was ahead of schedule and that communication had gone very well with the company. Chief Blanchard stated all COVID measures remained in place and the firehouse was still limited access. Chief Blanchard stated that while the Franklin hydrant system was not officially in service Yantic was able to utilize a hydrant on a call and had no issues. Chief Blanchard noted the thread connection for the steamer fitting was incorrect however the Franklin town selectman expeditiously got in touch with the hydrant manufacturers and resolved the issue.
- **Occum:** None.
- **East Great Plain:** Chief Keith Milton reported 101 emergency responses for the month with 25 calls occurring in a four hour time period. Chief Milton stated regular training has continued with social distancing utilized and the new truck went into service the past week. Chief Milton stated the truck had minor glitches but nothing hampering service and that Engine 52 had been out of service over a week the past month due to numerous mechanical and pump issues. Chief Milton reported EGP currently had enough PPE for the future and that members were doing due diligence in regards to COVID and social distancing. Chief Milton stated the firehouse was closed to non-essential workers and there currently was one member quarantining due to family exposure. Alderman DeLucia asked if the apparatus in the rear of the firehouse was coming out of service. Chief Milton responded it was and would be retrieved by the new truck company by the end of the week as a trade-in.

• **Laurel**

**Hill:**

None.

- d. **City Manager Update - 2020 Fire Service Study Contract:** City Manager John Salomone reported tthe consultant commenced the project about a week after council authorization and an informational request had been distributed to all departments to assist with putting data together. City Manager Salomone stated the consultant requested an in-person meeting October 5th and 6th and his assistant was coordinating that meeting with the chiefs, elected officials, and stakeholders. City Manager Salomone stated that currently the project was on schedule.
- e. **Public Safety items for future discussion:** Discussion regarding the language of the Volunteer Firefighter Tax Abatement in regards to retired volunteer firefighters who are enrolled in the pension plan.

VI. **Next Meeting: October 14, 2020, via ZOOM App, unless otherwise notified.**

VII. **Adjournment:** Upon a motion by Alderman Bettencourt, seconded by Alderman Nash, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:59 PM. checked who did who recording

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Katherine Rose*