

## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Regular Meeting via ZOOM App

Wednesday June 10, 2020

7:00 PM

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

**Committee Members Absent:** Alderman William Nash.

**Administration and Staff Present:** City Manager John Salomone, City of Norwich; Chris LaRose, Norwich Public Utilities; and Chief Patrick Daly, Norwich Police Department.

**Volunteer/Central Fire Departments and Others:** Norwich Chief Keith Wucik; Taftville Chief Timothy Jencks; East Great Plain Chief Keith Milton; Laurel Hill Chief Aaron Westervelt; and Yantic Chief Frank Blanchard.

**Citizens Present:** Peter Clark.

- I. **Call to Order and Quorum:** Alderman DeLucia called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. There was a quorum present.
- II. **Citizen Comment:** Peter Clark of 46 Perry Avenue stated he was given a link to access the meeting and was requested for a password which he was able to get but feels others may run into the same issue when trying to access the meetings. Alderman DeLucia clarified that the link is reserved for members of the public safety complex that will present during the meeting as a protection against strangers hacking into meetings inappropriately. Alderman DeLucia stated the public has the ability to dial into the meetings by phone and they will not be prompted for a password. Alderman DeLucia stated the information to access the Public Safety meetings can be found on the Public Safety meeting agenda located on the City website.

Chief Timothy Jencks of 32 Providence Street stated he has requested a camera to be attached to the Taftville Fire Station that can be tied into the existing fiber connection, that City dispatch could access to monitor nighttime incidents at the area playground, several times over the years. Chief Jencks stated the week prior there was an incident with a machete that was handled quickly but in the interest of public safety with the amount of children in the area he felt the camera is a need. Alderman DeLucia clarified that the proposed camera would connect into

the Norwich Police Department fiber network to which Chief Jencks responded it would as there is already City fiber networking in the firehouse. Chief Jencks stated he felt the need outweighs the costs based on the level of incidents in the area. Chief Patrick Daly stated as part of a design for the City's public safety system done previously NPD had included an expansion of cameras to Taftville under Gary Evans but after he left his position projects were accessed and it was determined that Taftville no longer qualified for the expansion. Chief Daly stated it was not a cheap project however it was highly successful in other areas and funding would be through community block funding. Alderman Bettencourt asked if the project in Taftville had been approved for funding. Chief Daly responded that it had but funding was shifted to a West side neighborhood after reevaluation. Chris LaRose of NPU stated he did not have a cost estimate at hand but would be happy to put one together if one had not been done in the past. Alderman DeLucia asked that the estimate be passed along to the Public Safety Committee.

### III. **New Business:**

#### a. **Department Updates:**

- i. **NPU Update:** Chris LaRose reported NPU is at 100% staffing with adequate PPE and they are doing everything possible to work socially distant. Chris LaRose stated all staff is either working from home or segregated crews to prevent cross contamination. Chris LaRose stated NPU will open its service center at the end of month and continue to make work spaces safer in anticipation of full time occupancy. Alderman DeLucia asked if NPU had received new protocols for utilities and the City in general in terms of decontamination. Chris LaRose stated NPU is following CDC guidelines in training everyone towards as well as providing the ability for everyone to clean their own workspace and are utilizing Norwich Public Works for cleaning communal areas. Chris LaRose stated there is an outside crew available for whatever communal decontamination the City can't handle. Alderman DeLucia asked what protocols are in place in terms of service for the future. Chris LaRose reported there will be a limit of 2 customers within the service center and NPU will begin with a NPD office stationed at each entrance and will determine if that's need long term. Chris LaRose stated NPU will take temperatures prior to entry, require masks and utilize barriers to protect employees and customers.

- ii. **American Ambulance** None.
- iii. **Police Department Update:** Chief Patrick Daley briefly discussed dealing with ongoing protests and thanked the City for its support during these times. Chief Daley reported things have been hectic between the virus and protest but NPD is moving forward. Chief Daley reported one officer on FTO but full staff otherwise with adequate PPE thanks to the assistance of Chief Keith Wucik. Alderman DeLucia let NPD know how proud he is of how they've conducted themselves during protests and the empathy they've shown. Chief Patrick Daley stated he had a very productive four-hour meeting with one of the protest organizers and activists to try and bridge gaps and build connections.
- iv. **Emergency Management Update:** Chief Keith Wucik stated the Emergency Operations Center is still in partial open status due to COVID-19. Chief Wucik stated he is in daily communication with DMHAS and other state agencies in regard to COVID-19 and have continued disturbing PPE to local agencies when requested.
- v. **Fire Department Updates:**
  - **Taftville:** Chief Timothy Jencks reported that call numbers are slowly increasing with 57 runs last month; half being EMS and the other half fire response. Chief Jencks stated he continually closely monitors daily CDC updates and started slowly opening up training programs for physical person-to-person training. Chief Jencks reported that ET32 went to the City garage for routine maintenance and they are hoping for delivery on the new truck around July 4th. Chief Jencks state's he has continued PPE pickups for the station and they are finishing up specifications for the Fire Marshall upgrade so that it can be put out to bid. Chief Jencks stated due to not using training funding because of COVID they were able to move around money to fund a temporary parking lot installation for additional parking spaces.
  - **East Great Plain:** Chief Keith Milton reported a relatively normal call volume with just under 70 the past month and that their ladder truck returned and wa back in service as of 5:00 the previous evening. Chief Milton stated he is in a similar position as Taftville with limited training and utilizing online training as

much as possible. Chief Mitlon stated EGP's new truck is currently in Massachusetts being letter and would be in Connecticut the following week for ladders and radio installations.

- **Occum:** None.
- **Yantic:** Chief Frank Blanchard reported healthy membership at 60 members, all currently available. Chief Blanchard stated Yantic's training schedule was also altered so they are doing as much as possible with working outdoors. Chief Blanchard reported all apparatus in service with Rescue 3 going down to the City garage for electrical issues and wipers. Chief Blanchard stated the Fire Marshall abatement work should be completed by end of the end of July and that they would be closing up the end-of-year budget within the next couple days. Chief Blanchard reported Yantic has also returned to a normal call volume with 50 in the past month.
- **Laurel Hill:** Chief Aaron Westervelt reported that Engin 61 had been in service within the last three weeks but after doing extensive work out-of-state it had to return to Mississippi for repairs where it was delayed followed by a single day of service where it was utilized at a garage fire in Ledyard. Chief Westervelt stated due to restrictions on gathering they have been limited on training but looking to start up again in the near future. Alderman DeLuia asked how the new truck performed to which Chief Westervelt responded it did very well and it was nice to be able to depend on a steady supply of water while they searched for a better source.
- **Norwich:** Chief Keith Wucik reported 147 calls since the last meeting with 57 fire and 90 EMS calls. Chief Wucik stated that Truck 1 was out service currently due to an electronic malfunction in the turntable and did not have an estimated turn around but figured they should see it in the next week. Chief Wucik reported one vacancy in staffing that they are looking to fill and that both stations are still on limited public training, company and platoon training. Chief Wucik stated Norwich holds daily COVID-19 meetings to update everyone and they still take extra precautions around stations and incidents. Alderman DeLuCia stated he

noticed that the marine vehicle Chief Scandariato was back in the water for Summer service. Chief Keith Wucik responded that Chief Scan actually remains in the water year-round aside from service as it has a heater on the fire pump and a bubbler is put nearby so that ice does not accumulate around the ship.

**b. City Manager Update - 2020 Fire Service Study RFP:** City Manager John Salomone reported they have been working on the study since the resolution was agreed to by Council and a draft RFP should be complete on June the 12th. City Manager Salomone stated a working group was established which includes a representative chief from the volunteer department who is working on their comments on the RFP and also a chief from the paid department who is also working on comments. City Manager Salomone said a meeting was scheduled for the following afternoon to go over everything. City Manager Salomone predicted the language would be completed by Friday with a final draft completed by the end of the month. City Manager Salomone stated the next process before sending out the RFP would be to pick a group of consultants to choose to be invited to the RFP process, which can take some time. City Manager Salomone stated they are working to limit the scope to New England which would be more cost effective. City Manager Salomone stated consultants would be given two weeks to repair a request for proposal and stated that by July 30th interviews would be conducted with the selection completed by the August 3rd City Council Meeting. City Manager Salomone stated per the Council decision his group will return an exact dollar amount for the study. City Manager Salomone recalled there had been concern regarding the cost of the study would so before the RFP is awarded they want to confirm that Council is comfortable with the cost of the project. City Manager Salomone stated assuming that study moves forward and they receive notice to proceed on or around August 7th then he projects to have the study completed by end of October or just before Thanksgiving in order to meet the November 30th Council deadline. Alderman DeLucia asked if the City comptroller was involved in the group. City Manager Salomone Responded that he is sometimes in attendance and they utilize his expertise in numbers. Alderman Bettencourt and City Manager Salomone discussed the potential city making process would be in relation to the purchasing agents involved.

IV. **Next Meeting:** July 8, 2020, via ZOOM App, unless otherwise notified.

V. **Adjournment:** Upon a motion by Alderman Bettencourt, seconded by

Alderman DeLucia, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:47 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
*Katherine Rose*