

**EMERGENCY SERVICES EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE
TOWN OF WILLINGTON
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
REGULAR MEETING
March 12, 2024**

Members present: Peter Tanaka; Chairman and First Selectman, From Willington Fire Department #1 (WFD#1): Alex Moore; Chief. From Willington Hill Fire Department (WHFD): Tom Snyder; Chief, Bobby Knight; 2nd Assistant Chief, Mike Makuch; Lieutenant and James Knight; President. Also in attendance were Bruce Carlson, firefighter WFD#1 and on zoom James Marshall.

1. Call to Order.

The meeting of the Emergency Services Efficiency Committee was called to order at 6:37 p.m. on March 12, 2024 by Chairman Peter Tanaka.

2. Seating of Alternates.

There were no alternates to seat.

3. Present to Speak.

No one was present to speak.

4. Approval of Minutes.

Chief Moore moved to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2023 meeting, seconded by Lieutenant Makuch.

Vote: All yes.

5. Old Business.

a. Building Status (Facilities Committee)

Chairman Tanaka stated that there is not a facilities committee yet, but the BOS should be voting on it on Monday. The charge is posted on the Town website and open for comment. Chairman Tanaka is hoping he has both fire departments support for this committee. Chief Moore asked if there has been any feedback from residents, and Chairman Tanaka stated that there has been some feedback from residents, and they are taking that in to account.

b. Staffing - Volunteer Numbers and Paid Coverage

Chairman Tanaka asked how the staffing and volunteer levels were at each department and commented that he has noticed a lot of young kids around. Chief Moore stated that his staffing is okay right now. They had one junior that just joined WHFD as she has friends at WHFD and WFD#1 only has one junior left who is aging out, but they would be happy to transition her back if she was interested in riding the ambulance, etc. Lieutenant Makuch stated they have about 7 juniors right now. Chairman Tanaka asked how training was going for the young members, and Chief Snyder stated it was going well. Discussion was had on the training that the juniors can do, EMT classes, online EMT classes, the cost of EMT and firefighter classes, etc.

c. CIP Status

Chairman Tanaka mentioned that CIP is now done. He stated that there is a CIP meeting tomorrow night, and they are looking at the out years if anyone is interested in attending.

d. Town of Union Discussions

Chairman Tanaka asked if there was an update on the Town of Union funding, and Chief Moore stated that the Town of Union is going to pay \$5,000 this year and every year the amount will escalate. Chief Moore stated that the Town of Union agreed they need to pay for something, they just want to make sure they are paying their fair share, and they have a formula that is spelled out. Chairman Tanaka asked Chief Moore to save that formula as it may be asked about. Chief Moore stated that they have about a 99% collection from billing the residents of Union, but sometimes they have trouble getting the funding from people on the highway in Union, but they also have that same problem in Willington.

e. EMS Union Status

Chairman Tanaka asked if the contract negotiations have started yet. Chief Moore stated that the date hasn't been set yet, but the contract doesn't expire until June 30, 2024.

f. Tax Abatement

Chairman Tanaka stated that the volunteer tax abatement has been voted on, passed and should be on the books. Lieutenant Makuch stated that the support seemed to be there for it.

g. Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (Town SOP Draft) Update?

Chief Moore stated that regarding Everbridge, they are working on a date within the next month between Willington and Tolland to do it jointly and there will be two different sessions that will be available. They will hopefully be hosting one in Willington and one in Tolland. Lieutenant Makuch asked what the sessions were, and Chairman Tanaka stated that it was how to use Everbridge, how to get login credentials, how to set up the databases, how to set up the Town website, how to send people to the correct website, how to set up for the correct database, how to set the parameters for it. He stated that it would have been great to have it in place about two months ago when they had a snowstorm, because you can knock out a block for Town employees and with one computer entry you can call all employees cell phone, home phone, text message and email. Chairman Tanaka stated it is coming and from Willington the two Chiefs, the First Selectman's Administrative Assistant and himself will have login credentials for it, and TN will also be able to login to it once the database is filled. Discussion was had on what would be set up ahead of time to have ready for emergencies.

6. New Business.

Chairman Tanaka stated that one item not on the agenda is the legislative initiatives on the State level. He gave each Chief Bill 422, which has a lot to do with both paid and volunteer firefighters that live in the town that they work in. He believes that if you live in the town you work in, there is mortgage assistance. There are a lot of things in that bill and it's for recruitment and retention. He stated that it affects the Town in that they can retain their firefighters, but it does not affect the town moneywise. Lieutenant Makuch stated that there have been some very interesting bills in this legislative session, and last Thursday the Fire Marshals statewide and in other states put up a big objection to some proposed changes that seemed to come from the building industry to greatly reduce the code to get more square footage (eliminating second stairways in apartment buildings, etc.). He stated that the opposition to that is very strong throughout the country, but he thinks it will get through in some states. He thinks he sees Connecticut stopping it as there were many things bad about it and one was it was going to allow builders to claim that the local fire department using ladders and ladder trucks would be the second means of egress for apartment buildings, which as people in the fire industry know is completely preposterous. Further discussion was had on this subject. Chief Moore stated that there is another bill that is going to be introduced with changes to Fire Administrators and State Fire Marshals as well as other changes. He stated that there are a lot of good things in the bill, but there are also a lot of bad things in the bill. Discussion was had on this bill.

Chief Moore thanked everyone who came out last night for the after action for the High Chase fire. He stated that he and Chairman Tanaka have letters going to some of the Town staff that helped during the event. Chairman Tanaka stated that Karen Cote, Troy Sposato and Tish Ignatowicz all turned out early in the morning to help with any Town related issues regarding the fire. Chief Moore stated that the Town has been made whole of any expenses they incurred for that day. He again thanked everyone that turned out last night and was at the fire. He stated that last night was a great learning experience for everyone. Chairman Tanaka stated that regarding this issue, he met with the Associate Vice President from Public Safety at UConn today and was informed that when the students are not in the dorms in the summer and other times when the students aren't there, they have more than enough housing and housing people (to watch people) as a resource if needed. He stated that they don't have much room when the students are there. He also stated that WRTD is now doing all the transportation for UConn. Chairman Tanaka stated that the Associate Vice President is going to have his Emergency Management Director contact Stuart Cobb, our Emergency Management Director and Chief Moore about regional coordination. He also thanked the Associate Vice President for sending more mutual aid than they receive from Willington.

Chairman Tanaka also met with Brian Foley, Town Manager in Tolland about their fire staffing and animal control to make sure that evens out.

a. New Budget Issues?

Chief Moore stated that they are going to be tight on their budget as repairs to trucks has hit them hard (\$13,000 in tires for ET 213 which was budgeted at \$3,000). They are working with Donna Latincsics to see what they had left from last year in their budget. The only other issue they have is figuring out what is happening with the gear, as it was voted out of the CIP plan. WFD#1 had it in their budget and WHFD had it in CIP, so they had to add \$20,000 to their budget.

b. Any Concerns That Have Arisen Since Last Meeting

Chairman Tanaka asked if there was anything anyone was concerned about, and Chief Moore stated that the only concern is getting through the BOF meeting Thursday night. Chief Moore stated that both fire departments can use all the support they can get at this meeting and to get supporters to come to it if they can.

c. Next Steps/Agenda Items

None.

7. Correspondence.

None.

8. Good and Welfare.

Chairman Tanaka again thanked both fire departments for their work at High Chase and the incident on I-84 in Union. He stated that he is going to talk to Troop C about getting numbers on untimely deaths, Class A felonies and major chases as he is not getting any information on any of that from them.

WHFD stated that their Annual Easter Egg Hunt is coming up.

Chief Moore mentioned that he will be discussing apparatus placement on the highway with WFD#1.

Chairman Tanaka mentioned that the 300th anniversary of the town is coming up and there is a committee in place. He would like a volunteer from each department to serve on the committee. James Callaghan from Parks and Recreation is heading the committee.

9. Adjournment.

Chief Moore moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lieutenant Makuch.

Vote: All yes.

This meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Smith

Eileen Smith

Recording Secretary

RECEIVED
WILLINGTON, CT.

2024 MAR 20 A 8:35


TOWN CLERK