

# TOWN OF WILLINGTON

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Board of Selectmen  
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## Emergency Communication Task Force

Special Meeting Minutes  
Via web interaction (via Zoom platform)

November 18, 2020  
6:30 PM

*\*Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

WFD#1 Chief Moore called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM with the following in attendance; First Selectwoman Erika Wiczenski, Superintendent Phil Stevens, WFD#1 Chief Alex Moore, Mike Makuch, Sarah Worthen and Stuart Cobb.

Members absent – Christina Mailhos, Lt Robert Palmer & Vincent Pagano

### Approval of Minutes

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to approve the minutes of October 21, 2020 as written.

Mr. Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: 3 Yes (Wiczenski, Stevens, Makuch) 1 Abstain Moore 0 No

- A. Presentation of EverBridge system by Doug Rasicot from Tolland County Mutual Aid (TN).  
Mr. Rasicot surveyed the group to see what questions they have related to EverBridge in efforts to streamline the presentation.

Mr. Makuch expressed that the committee has seen various demonstrations from other vendors. The question that he posed was “what shortcuts are available in the process with comparison of the functionality between EverBridge and the Code/Red Product”?

Mr. Rasicot noted that EverBridge is available through TN dispatch for free. Built into that at the State Level is access to the 911 database along with everyone who has opted into the CT.GOV alert system. For example a public message was facilitated on Monday November 16<sup>th</sup> on behalf of First Selectwoman Wiczenski. That message was sent to 4,062 people. If it is decided to use a local level platform it will take time to build that database and you may not reach the number of residents that you expect. You will be reliant on residents subscribing to Willington CT alerts vs the accessibility of utilizing everyone who has already opted into the CT.GOV alerts. These would be instances of disseminating critical information. If you are also looking to send administrative notifications such as; delays and closures you may benefit from a local level platform. As indicated previously such databases take time to build. Information will need to be maintained, propaganda will need to be sent to the public to self-subscribe. The system would need to be used regularly for the ease in accessibility while leveraging both platforms.

Superintendent Stevens wanted to clarify his understanding that if the decision is to go with Everbridge, we would have a Willington account and a secondary alert group.

Mr. Rasicot stated that is correct and advised maintenance is key. He also indicated the need to understand where your subscriber data is coming from for example In 2011 Tolland had a landline subscriber list of 7,000 that list has reduced down to 4,000 due to the fact that residents are

eliminating landlines for cell phones to reduce costs. In analyzing the data it's important to know where and why you may find variances over time.

WFD#1 Chief Moore asked if the decision is made to not send administrative messages and we continue to utilize Everbridge for critical information only there would be no cost incurred?

Mr. Rasicot advised that is correct, TN will assist in condensing a message as the limitation is one minute's time of recording in addition to fielding the data based on what content is public information. There are some advances with text messaging within Everbridge as well. Mr. Rasicot has facilitated messages being sent for Tolland for the past nine years. He advised there are messages that are appropriate and messages that are not appropriate for that time and or event. TN will assist in guiding appropriate information at the appropriate time frame based on the event in question. For example sending a message at 2:00 AM to communicate a road closure may not be appropriate to maintain the effectiveness of the system. We don't want the community to opt out of alerts notifications due to inconvenience.

Mr. Makuch asked if Everbridge has the ability to send cell phone messages to a geographical area. For example a hazmat incident, weather alert, accident etc. Can Everbridge be leveraged as a tool to target a several mile radius?

Mr. Rasicot advised that is not available currently through Everbridge. The State Police Message Center has the capabilities to send cellular alerts with in a specific geographical radius. Mr. Rasicot also prefaced that there is a lot of credentialing required on the federal and State level to obtain that level of function and access.

Mr. Makuch noted that during the Code Red demonstration that option was available.

Mr. Rasicot responded by saying that if a resident subscribed to the Everbridge alerts then the said resident would receive the notification however cellular phone alerts for a geographical area outside of the subscription would need to be issued by the State Police Message Center for that level of access.

First Selectwoman Wicinski clarified that from the Code Red presentation they have another product to purchase in addition called FEMA Integrated Public Alert Warning System (IPAWS). The subscribers would have to be in our database to disseminate to the chosen geographic area unless you had the app loaded on your cell phone and happened to be driving through that area when the alert was issued.

Mr. Rasicot clarified by saying Everbridge does have the capability to disseminate a message to a specific geographic area which can be accessed through the shape library however under the caveat that the resident has subscribed to receive such alerts. Currently the State Police Message Center is the only agency that has access to the IPAWS system. TN does not have access to IPAWS as the credentialing is a laborious process. In the event that we had to send an alert to evacuate a certain area TN would leverage the situation additionally by contacting the State Police Message Center to utilize the IPAWS system. This would function two ways, the alert would go out to all of the subscribers in the area and also the IPAWS alert would capture and send an alert to anyone who happens to be in the area at that time via cell phone alert messaging.

Mr. Cobb noted that the State of Connecticut has done a good job getting resident's to sign up for CT Alerts which puts the Town of Willington at an advantage utilizing TN's services vs. starting a platform from scratch.

Mr. Rasicot described how Tolland currently utilizes the Everbridge system. Messages that are broadcasted are; COVID related messages, Storm warning with the caveat that messages won't be sent after 9:00 P.M. Road closures surrounding rush hour times via text and e-mail only. Any surrounding actionable information are broadcasted by telephone voice message. Serious events all three would be utilized; text, e-mail and telephone voice message.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski noted that a good example of that scenario was the last COVID message sent out last week. The message was crafted Friday after careful review it was determined to be too late in the evening. The decision was made to hold off as to not worry residents unnecessarily as the message was informational and not of a serious event. The decision to hold off created some disconnect with the COVID message sent on Thursday previously through an e-mail blast and Facebook. The voice message that went out on Monday directed residents to our website and not directly to the COVID link. We recognize through this exercise that we fell short and have learned that we need to link that message specifically to the information being relayed to not cause confusion for residents.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski wanted to speak on behalf of Lt. Palmer as he was not able to attend this evening's meeting. He has distributed some canned message examples to the group currently used in the Everbridge system that would be a good model to review.

Mr. Rasicot was encouraged that Phil Stevens was present in the meeting. He advised that perhaps you can utilize school messenger that is currently being used by the Willington School System to leverage Town and community alerts. It's a great resource if a large scale incident occurs your all working together. He noted it's important to have resources who know how to use the system and use it regularly. If there is an event a learning curve is not impactful in getting your message out timely.

The discussion continued into the pricing for each platform application. Everbridge fees would be \$6,011.41 1<sup>st</sup> year and \$5,566.12 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Code Red would be \$2,000 total annual cost for the basic product for emergency and general messages with 9,000 system minutes. \$2,500 annually for Unlimited Emergency Plus; which includes 17,000 system minutes and lastly \$3,000 annually for Limitless access. The committee weighed the pros and cons of each application with the associated cost and justification of usage. Both applications are very similar in functions but are vastly different in cost.

Mr. Makuch mentioned it would be beneficial to see with any platform selected; levels of notifications whereas a subscriber selects what level of notification they would like to receive. Red level critical incident, Yellow level information such as road closures and so on.

#### B. Discussion on questions/information for residents

A discussion was held, after the last meeting an e-mail was distributed to the group for review. Mr. Makuch noted in sending a survey out to residents it would be beneficial to have multiple choice answers and freeform answers. It was noted that the advantage to multiple choice surveys is it allows us to collect data. Free form gives resident's the ability to communicate with their general feedback.

#### C. Review surrounding town notification protocols

Lt Palmer is researching and will provide feedback at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday December 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 @ 6:30

First Selectwoman Wiecewski moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 PM  
WFD#1 Chief Moore seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 Yes (Wiecewski, Moore, Stevens, Makuch, Worthen, Cobb) 0 No.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Sharpley

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT  
Received for record November 24, 20  
At 1:12 pm RM  
TC