

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Regular Meeting via ZOOM App

Wednesday February 10, 2021

7:00 PM

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

Committee Members Absent: None.

Administration and Staff Present: City Manager John Salomone and Mayor Peter Nystrom, 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; Occum: Chief Carroll Spaulding; Yantic: Chief Frank Blanchard and Taftville: Chief Timothy Jencks.

Citizens Present: None.

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 January 13, 2021 meeting minutes. Alderman Nash seconded. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Citizen Comment: Mayor Peter Nystrom extended thanks to fire and police personnel who had assisted recently at local food distribution sites.

IV. Old Business:

a. COVID-19 Resurgence Impacts: City Manager John Salomone reported that in the last three weeks there had been a reduction in the surge of COVID cases from the peak of 120 infections per 100,000 people to about 60-63 infections per 100,000 people. City Manager Salomone added that the New London and Backus Hospital have seen a reduced patient load, by about half, from what they had seen weeks prior. City Manager Salomone stated the City would remain at its current status due to reports of virus variations abroad. City Manager Salomone discussed ongoing immunization efforts at the local senior centers and through Uncas Health District. Chief Tracy Montoya and City Manager Salomone discussed potential increased vaccine availability based on the changing situation.

b. Hunters' Road Truck Traffic: Chief Patrick Daly reported that he contacted the State Traffic Commission to inquire on having the road designated as a 'no truck road', however the state only prohibits 'thru' traffic which applies to vehicles not stopping within the town whether it be its designation or origin, so while the City could do local ordinances limiting the types of trucks permitted it may become problematic.

- c. **2020 Fire Service Update:** Alderman DeLucia stated the consultant would make a presentation to City Council on February 16th in chambers.

V. New Business:

a. Department Updates:

- i. **NPU Update:** Eric McDermott reported that NPU is continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely with a majority of their workforce working from home. Eric McDermott stated that NOU is working closely with Uncas Health District regarding vaccinations with their wastewater employees likely falling under the 1B category while the remaining workforce would fall under 1C. Eric McDermott reported that both reservoirs were back at full pond and notified the departments that NPU completed adding all of their solar installations to the fire department applications and GIS map.
- ii. **American Ambulance:** Robert Rautio reported 718 emergencies for the month with 263 ALS calls and 443 BLS calls, and noted that ALS calls seemed to be back on track with their 2019 numbers. Robert Rautio stated there was minimal COVID impact to staffing and currently about 44% of clinical staff that had signed up for the vaccination had completed their second dose. Robert Rautio reported a current national backorder for medical gloves.
- iii. **Police Department Update:** Chief Patrick Daly reported a couple heroin seizures that had occurred in the past month and that NPD has been working with NPU regarding ongoing storms. Chief Daly stated there were currently no COVID impacts to staffing and that 20 percent of the department completed well-being checks as part of the recent accountability bill.
- iv. **Emergency Management Update:** Chief Tracy Montoya reported that DEHMAS would be holding a training the following day for the new A-Tech radios they received the past month. Chief Montoya stated the EOC was prepped and ready for the recent storms but was not activated.
- v. **Fire Department Updates:**
 - **Norwich:** Chief Tracy Montoya reported 173 incidents for the past month with 61 fire calls, 112 EMS, and 29 overlapping calls with mutual aid provided 6 times and received 3. Chief Montoya reported the Squad A replacement as a critical need, that Engine 3 was back in service with a new fuel tank and that Truck 2 was repaired and operating fully as a ladder. Chief Montoya stated their Director of Safety and Training position was open for external candidates and that two new hires had started the remote fire academy that week. Chief Montoya reported all personnel were in service and that the majority of members had received their second COVID vaccination. Chief Montoya stated both fire stations remained closed to the public and that the window replacement at headquarters was ongoing.
 - **Taftville:** Chief Timothy Jencks reported 55 calls for the month with 27 EMS, 28 fire, and mutual aid provided nine times and received twice. Chief Jencks stated that about 70 percent of members had taken the COVID vaccination and that for critical needs the department would need to upgrade the electrical coming into the building as the pole it sits on has been replaced by NPU. Chief Jencks discussed potential furnace needs with Alderman DeLucia.
 - **Yantic:** Chief Frank Blanchard reported 46 calls for month and

that all apparatus were in service with standard maintenance completed. Chief Blanchard reported the department was slowly transferring back to in-person training from online. Chief Blanchard reported they were working on their budget and that recently a leak was found in their steam boiler, which would need to be repaired, but otherwise their critical breeds remained the same.

- **Occum:** Chief Carroll Spaulding reported 42 current members and 15 calls for the past month. Chief Spaulding stated he was going to start opening in-house training for members but due COVID-19 the station was still closed to the public. Chief Spaulding stated that members were in the process of getting first and second rounds of the COVID vaccine. Chief Spaulding stated he was exploring how to complete the department physical and fit tests that year and that the firehouse was still hosting its Chicken BBQ dinners as takeout only. Chief Spaulding reported their critical needs as replacement of Engine 41.
- **East Great Plain:** Chief Keith Milton reported 67 emergencies for the month with some carbon monoxide calls with 7 overlapping and mutual aid provided 9 times. Chief Milton reported routine maintenance on apparatus and that EGP was continuing online training with a couple members in the Firefighter 1 class. Chief Milton stated all members were remaining vigilant in regards to COVID sanitation cleanings and that one member was currently quarantining due to exposure from a coworker. Chief Milton stated some members had received the first dose of the COVID vaccination. Chief Milton reported the firehouse was receiving quotes for asbestos abatement as well as siding. Chief Milton stated that EGP would be making a submission to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant for turnout gear.
- **Laurel Hill:** None. City Manager John Salomone stated the City has approved and funded a contractor to complete the wall repair work but was unsure of the status of the job due to the recent weather.

b. Public Safety items for future discussion: Alderman DeLucia reported to Chief Jencks that he visited Beebe Road and saw the brush had been trimmed slightly but not sufficiently and would plan to bring their concerns up at the next Public Works meeting. Alderman Nash suggested a future update on ice levels in rivers and dams from NPU.

VI. Next Meeting: March 10, 2021, via ZOOM App, unless otherwise notified.

VII. Adjournment: Upon a motion by Alderman Bettencourt, seconded by Alderman Nash, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM. All voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Katherine Rose*