



EMS Commission – Town of Bethel

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center

1 School Street, Bethel, CT 06801

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TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

5:00 p.m.

CJH Municipal Center – Meeting Room “A”

PRESENT: First Selectman Robert Burke, Director of Health Laura Vasile, Bethel Fire Department (BFD) Chief Fred Ingram, Stony Hill Fire Department (SHFD) Chief Ken Parciasepe and Fire Marshall/Emergency Management Director Thomas Galliford,

First Selectman Burke called the Special Meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Public Comment: No comments from the public present.

New Business: Bob Burke, First Selectman, advised that he and Laura V. have a meeting scheduled with Dr Broderick, EMS Medical Director, Danbury Hospital, for Thursday, June 26, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the new Bethel EMS Commission goals and objectives and to obtain comments/recommendations from Dr Broderick concerning comprehensive town wide EMS service delivery in the Town of Bethel for all residents.

Reports from BFD Chief and SHFD Chief concerning Work Agreement to provide comprehensive town wide EMS Service in town:

Chief Ingram reported that he just recently picked up his mail and noted that a special EMS Commission meeting had been scheduled. Tom Galliford advised that a special meeting was called in order to provide the two Chiefs a chance to submit a draft working agreement that could be signed by the two PSA's to accommodate town wide comprehensive EMS Service delivery for all Bethel residents. Chief Ingram advised that BFD is in the process of signing the Consent Order with CT DPH tonight. He stated that BFD has been interviewing billing & collection companies and are soon activating a paid staff for daytime EMS coverage in their PSA only, which involves a billing & collection service. This new BFD operational plan was discussed by BFD membership on June 5, 2008. Chief Ingram presented several options to BFD membership and the organization's members voted to do whatever was necessary to remain a separate PSA working only in their PSA boundaries. The BFD membership believes that the SHFD PSA is a separate entity that should resolve their own EMS Service problems without the BFDs assistance. Chief Parciasepe said that BFDs action has caused a great imbalance in an overall town wide EMS Service delivery for all residents by only considering the BFD PSA territory and not taking in account a mutual aid agreement between the two PSAs serving all Bethel residents in town. Chief Parciasepe said that he was submitting to the Commission a draft work agreement proposal as requested by the Commission that identified ways for the two PSAs in Bethel to serve all residents living on the two sides of town. The SHFD Chief read his recommendations for the two PSAs to provide EMS Service to all residents regardless of which section of town they lived in. Tom Galliford asked Chief Ingram whether the BFD membership considered the SHFD or all residents when they met on 6/5/08 and decided to staff and bill separately. Chief Ingram said that the BFD membership decided that the matter was about their PSA, keeping their PSA intact and doing everything possible to protect their corporation and their PSA. The two Chiefs discussed the issue of whether having the two PSAs staff and bill separately would be positive and/or negative on the residents of Bethel and if the costs

would be a problem. Chief Ingram said that BFD is a private organization that wishes to remain so and took action that pertains to BFD alone. Laura Vasile asked Chief Ingram if he and/or the BFD membership discussed and/or considered the impact of their actions on all residents in town and the Chief replied that the BFD is only responsible for staffing a crew within their PSA. Chief Ingram said that SHFD can staff and bill residents on their own and it is not BFD's PSA responsibility to make sure that residents outside their PSA have EMS coverage. The Chief said that BFD is set to staff a BLS crew for their PSA per the Consent Order. He further said that the conditions of the Consent Order will be in effect for two years and therefore BFD must abide by those requirements as such. Chief Ingram did not prepare a work agreement proposal as requested by the Commission. The Chief did not have time and it is his belief that the Consent Order prevents him from working with the SHFD. Chief Ingram advised that he and Chief Parciasepe had no discussions on the two separate PSA's working together since the last Commission meeting. Chief Ingram advised that the prior Commission meeting minutes specifically clearly state that BFD will do whatever is necessary to hold onto their license. BFD is signing the Consent Order possibly this evening after the Commission meeting to assure the BFD PSA remains intact. The BFD paid staff should be working during the daytime hours soon for the BFD PSA only. BFD is set to bill to cover the cost for the new paid staff.

Chairman Burke asked if the BFD has a business plan for the new strategy that they have put in place. Chief Ingram said that they did. First Selectman Bob Burke asked if that business plan had been presented to the Board of Selectman and/or any town organization and the Chief replied no it has not. First Selectman Bob Burke informed the Commission that the town covers the cost of many items that support the operation of both the BFD and SHFD PSA organizations in town at this time. Chairman Burke made a motion that he and Laura Vasile contact Len Guercia at OEMS to discuss the actions taken by BFD and the potential impact on the town wide EMS Service for all residents, that Bethel Town Counsel be asked to attend a EMS Commission Special Meeting and that the BFD Attorney be asked to come to that meeting as well on Thursday June 26, 2008 to further discuss and act on the BFD PSA actions taken and plans to assure all Bethel residents are guaranteed EMS Services no matter what PSA they happen to be in when EMS service is needed. Chief Parciasepe seconded the motion. Discussion about the motion took place. Chief Ingram said that the regulations do not allow BFD to maintain a work agreement with SHFD to assure all residents have EMS service. He further said he was not going to bring his attorney and or be present at the next meeting because he was going to be out of town for the long weekend. A vote on the motion was taken. Four members in favor and one opposed. Chief Ingram opposed because he will be out of town for the Thursday special meeting.

Tom Galliford said that the big concern is that BFD is settling the Consent Order without going to the hearing and providing the First Selectman and/or the Town of Bethel with the ability to act as an intervener in the hearing to explain to the Attorney General that the Consent Order was preventing town wide EMS coverage for all Bethel residents and this DPH action risks the safety and health of Bethel residents as it stands. Chief Ingram inquired whether the First Selectman would take action against the BFD PSA? First Selectman Burke advised that he was going to do additional fact finding about the matter and he would take whatever action was necessary to assure all residents had EMS coverage. Chief Parciasepe stated that he wanted to understand the logic of the BFD membership and the action they took on their own separate of the other stakeholders involved with EMS service delivery for all residents. BFD has now forced SHFD to work separately of the BFD PSA in the same town with the potential risk that residents requiring EMS service in the Stony Hill Section of town may not receive EMS Services if necessary because BFD has determined that the Consent Order prevents them from complying with the mutual Aid agreement between the two PSAs. Chief Parciasepe further stated that it did not appear that BFD was concerned about the costs to residents of the BFD recommendation that two billing agencies and two paid staffs be maintained in the town to provide the best EMS service to the residents.

The Chiefs further discussed the issue of responding to resident's EMS calls and staffing plans that assure all residents have EMS coverage. Chief Ingram stated that the Consent Order prevented BFD from working with SHFD as requested by the Commission for the benefit of all town residents. Chief Ingram said that from his standpoint BFD EMS problems have been solved and he recommended SHFD staff and bill separately to resolve their difficulties with EMS service delivery in their jurisdiction. Chief Ingram said that there was a lot of potential revenue that the two PSAs can collect to provide their EMS services to residents. Chief Parciasepe advised that he was concerned about the costs to residents of BFD's recommendations and that it did not appear cost effective nor efficient to staff separate crews and separate bill agencies when a work agreement could be put in place to share staffing and billing for town wide EMS delivery. The two Chiefs discussed several options they had discussed over the last two years that BFD could not agree with because they wish to remain a separate independent PSA from SHFD PSA. Selectman Burke made a motion that Chief Ingram provide the Commission with the BFD June 5, 2008 meeting minutes and new business plan for the upcoming EMS Special Meeting scheduled for Thursday June 26, 2008 at 5:00 pm. Tom Galliford seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously carried. Chief Ingram observed that he would be in town this Thursday June 26, 2008 for the upcoming Commission meeting and he would bring the BFD documentation he presented this evening.

As there was no further business for today's agenda, Chief Parciasepe made a motion the Commission adjourns. First Selectman Burke seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Typed by Laura L. Vasile, Director of Health