STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ELLINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06029-0187

860-870-3182

John W. Turner
Chairman

Robert Edwards
Gary Feldman, Sr.
Peter Hany, Sr.
Douglas Harding
Bruce Hoffman
Walter Lee
Jack Rich II
Timothy Seitz
Charlotte J. Ward

Ad Hoc Emergency Services Committee
Tuesday, March 29, 2022
Special Meeting
Nicholas J. DiCorleto, Jr. Meeting Hall

MINUTES

Members Present: John Turner, Walter Lee, Douglas Harding, Gary Feldman, Sr., Peter Hany, Sr., Jack Rich II, Robert Edwards, Timothy Seitz

Members Absent: Bruce Hoffman, Charlotte Ward

Others Present: Joshua Rosenfeld, Ellington Volunteer Ambulance Corps (EVAC); Thomas Palshaw

I. Call to Order and Attendance

Chairman Turner called the Ad Hoc Emergency Services Committee Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Citizen's Forum: No citizens came forward.

III. Election of Chairman

Chairman Turner called for nominations for the position of Chairman.

MOVED (HANY), SECONDED (HARDING) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ELECT JOHN TURNER FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN.

Chairman Turner accepted the nomination and thanked the members for their support.

IV. Approval of Minutes: August 10, 2020

MOVED (FELDMAN), SECONDED (LEE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 10, 2020 MEETING AS PRESENTED.

V. Old Business/Updates

A. Trail Markings

Chairman Turner provided the members with an overview of the trail markers system. The Trails Committee continues to work on enhancements to the system. An ideal update for the future should include the addition of emergency markers to the MapGeo online map system to improve accessibility and visibility of the markers.

Tom Palshaw, 120 Pinney Street, shared that the signs were ready for the Kimball Trail and the Balanced Boulder Trail (Northern Connecticut Land Trust); the next property to be worked on will be the new Crystal Ridge Trail, but completion of that will not be for some time. The ESC members agreed that it would be preferable to verify the updates to the two properties that are ready and then revisit the Crystal Ridge Trail once the project is further along.

B. Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN)

Chairman Turner shared that this system has been around for a while and received some boosts with recent technological updates. The Town has established an agreement with CLMRN, but currently there is no further obligation on the Town's side until a decision is made to utilize that system. Timothy Seitz asked if there was any intent to go after grant funding for this item. Chairman Turner replied that once there is a need to use the system, that would be the point where looking into grant opportunities would make sense. He also shared that other organizations that have migrated to the system are happy with it and the advantages it provides.

C. Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP)

Chairman Turner shared that the Finance Office has taken over management of LOSAP. He reminded members that it's important to keep beneficiary cards up to date, and that the program runs on a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year. He reminded members of the process of submitting census reports and noted that it was important to everyone to be on the lookout for related information from the Finance Office. It is the responsibility of any retiree to keep their beneficiary cards up to date and provide any new information to the Finance Office. Chairman Turner ran through the numbers from last year's report and noted that there has been a decline in active members. Historically, the program has worked to keep members involved, but it may not be the best method moving forward.

VI. New Business

A. Emergency Services Incentives Plan

1. Compensation Comparison

Chairman Turner stated that it had been around six years since the Plan Agreement [ATTACHED] was updated, and he acknowledged that it may be time to reexamine the compensation structure, although it is a tough budget year to make any drastic changes.

2. Structure as Related to Fire-Rescue Service Needs vs. EMS Service Needs

Joshua Rosenfeld provided a handout to the members [ATTACHED]. He reviewed recommended changes to the plan that would better fit the needs of EVAC, which

currently has about 15 volunteer members. Chairman Turner acknowledged that there are differences in how each agency operates. Mr. Rosenfeld and Mr. Hany agreed that about two-thirds of EVAC's current coverage is by paid personnel.

Discussion was held on practical improvements to the plan that could produce realistic, positive changes to volunteer call response and duty hours. The ESC members all understand the difficulties volunteer agencies are facing and the philosophy behind the Emergency Services Incentive Plan (ESIP), but agree that changes need to be made.

Timothy Seitz suggested moving away from a sliding scale and assigning an increased flat rate for both call response and duty hours. As Quarter 3 comes to a close, it was agreed upon that the agencies would run their normal reports using the existing compensation structure, as well as run a comparison report using a flat rate of $2 per duty hour and $10 per call to assess the budgetary impacts such an adjustment would cause. Mr. Rosenfeld agreed to update the existing spreadsheet and distribute it to each agency to keep the reports consistent.

B. Run Cards for Structural Fire Responses

Chairman Turner shared his opinion that this item is out of the scope of the ESC's responsibility. It was agreed that the Emergency Services Agencies will meet independently as appropriate.

C. Role of the Emergency & Risk Management Director as Related to the Emergency Service Organizations

Walter Lee shared that on the emergency management side, he is responsible for administering Town-wide drills, opening the Emergency Operations Center, and ensuring that the agencies have what they need; he is not involved in the day-to-day operations. On the risk management side, he wants to ensure that each agency is utilizing best practices to avoid liability, as good policies and documentation helps avoid liability issues. Discussion was held over concerns about civilian oversight of trained professionals, as well as the level of authority the position had over the agencies. Chairman Turner recommended that agencies view Mr. Lee as an asset and a resource, as his experience can provide valuable insights to their operations.

VII. Adjournment

MOVED (HANY), SECONDED (LEE) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:43 P.M.

John W Turner

John W. Turner, Chairman

Town of Ellington

Emergency Services Incentive Program

SECTION 1: INCENTIVE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The purpose of the Town of Ellington Emergency Services Incentive Program (ESIP) is to recognize the tremendous time commitment made by the volunteers who serve in our local emergency services. The monetary incentive so provided is to encourage people to volunteer, encourage active participation, and help offset some of the personal expense incurred by the volunteers. The program shall be administered as follows...

A. The program shall be run on an annual fiscal year basis from July 1st through June 30th.

B. A volunteer shall be eligible to participate in the program if:

1. He/she is in good standing according to the Department's applicable rules and regulations for six months prior to entering the incentive program as well as during the incentive program period.
2. Any volunteer receiving a certification as recognized in Section IV during the six months waiting period, shall receive incentives in accordance with Section IV

C. The responsibility for maintaining records of emergency call responses and attendance at training sessions shall be that of the Fire Chief/President. **Following a program quarter**, the Fire Chief/President will forward to the **Finance Department** the following information regarding each eligible incentive recipient:

1. Name, social security number, and mailing address.
2. Status: Officer (Rank) or Firefighter/Member or Junior Firefighter/Fire Explorer /Rescue Post Member.
3. Number of emergency call responses during program **quarter**.
4. Number of training session units attended during program **quarter**.
5. Number of certification training units completed during program **quarter**.
6. **Scheduled duty** hours performed during program **quarter**.
7. Total incentive payment due for program **quarter**.

D. Approved incentives for certifications will be paid in accordance with Section IV (c). Other approved incentives will be paid to each recipient **quarterly**.

E. Program recipients who receive incentives in any calendar year will be issued **the appropriate tax documents** per applicable regulations. It will then be the individual recipient's responsibility to report the amount of annual incentives according to any appropriate state and federal tax regulations.

SECTION II: OFFICER INCENTIVES

A. Officers shall receive the following annual incentive amounts:

Fire Chief/President	$950.00
Assistant Fire Chief/Vice President	$850.00
Deputy Chief	$750.00
Captain	$600.00
Lieutenant	$500.00

B. Officers are also eligible to participate in Section III of the program.

SECTION III: EMERGENCY RESPONSES

A. Emergency services personnel shall receive incentives for their **quarterly** emergency responses according to the following scale.

1. Individuals responding to up to 20% of all calls for which they are qualified to respond, will receive $5.00 per call.
2. 21%-40% of all calls = $6.00 per call.
3. 41%-60% of all calls = $7.00 per call.
4. 61%-100% of all calls = $8.00 per call.
5. Junior Firefighters/Fire Explorers shall receive a flat rate of $3.00 per call.
6. EVAC Rescue Post members responding to calls during school hours shall receive a flat rate of $4.00 per call, and are not eligible for scheduled duty incentives.

B. A volunteer shall not receive credit from more than one agency for any emergency response.

C. It is intended that incentives will be paid to a recipient for all calls based on the highest percent attained per scale in section above.

D. Incentive for **scheduled duty** shall be a flat rate of $1.00 per hour. Volunteers are still eligible for part "A" above during scheduled duty hours.

SECTION IV: TRAINING

A. 'Training' constitutes training classes approved by the Fire Chief/President.

B. Volunteers shall receive a rate for 'training' of $4.00 per training unit.

APPENDIX A

Incentive Program Implementation Policy

These operational policies were developed in cooperation with the Town of Ellington Finance Officer for the purposes of …

- Presenting a unified quarterly comprehensive summary report
- Detailing the reporting period and review process prior to submission
- Explaining the town's payment schedule
- Explaining the participating agencies documentation requirement
- Defining the categories of participation

1. Each agency will summit a quarterly membership spreadsheet summary report that details the member's participation in each of the applicable categories to the Finance Officer. Each agency is to use the same reporting format.

2. The Department head will forward the summary report to the Finance Officer by the last business day of the month following the reporting quarter. *(Reporting Quarters end: September 30, Dec. 31, March 31, June 30)*

3. The agency will post the report for members to review and comment for a minimum of ten days. Any discrepancies must be corrected prior to the submission of the report to the Finance Officer.

4. Payment checks will be distributed by the Finance Office.

5. Each agency must maintain records to substantiate the information submitted in the summary report.

6. Any member who is working hours for a salaried compensation is not eligible to receive credit for Section III and/or Section IV of the program for the time they are working the salaried hours.

7. "Emergency Responses" are defined as any transmitted alarm requiring an immediate response.

8. "Scheduled Duty" is defined as scheduled coverage that is required to provide service. This may include crews for each ambulance. Scheduled coverage must be approved by the department Chief/President.

9. "Training" includes time spent participating in an activity where by the participant(s)/instructor(s) enhance their knowledge or skills, learn new skills, or train to meet operational policies/procedures. This includes driver training, scheduled training sessions, non-certification required compliance training and certified training. A "training unit" is equal to approximately 1.0 hour. Activities not included: general meetings and committee activity.

Ellington Vol. Fire Department, Inc.	**Ellington Vol. Ambulance Corps.**	**Crystal Lake Vol. Fire Department**
Dated: 6-26-15	**Dated:** 6-21-15	**Dated:** 7/23/15

Policy reviewed and accepted 12/17/ 2001
BOS Revised 02/08/2004, effective 01/01/2004
BOS Revised 11/14/2011
BOS Revised 06/15/2015, effective July 1, 2015

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C. Volunteers shall receive a rate for 'training' of $5.00 per training unit for attending and passing the certification requirements of the designated course(s) as agree upon by the Emergency Service agencies.

Certification incentive payments will be made no sooner than six (6) months after, nor later than twelve (12) months after successful completion of a course, providing the member has remained in good standing during the waiting period.

SECTION V: TRANSFER OF SERVICE

Members of ESIP for the Town of Ellington who transfer from one organization (within Ellington) to another during a program year shall be allowed to carry over any accrued benefits from one department to another.

Current Policy

SECTION III: EMERGENCY RESPONSES

A. Emergency services personnel shall receive incentives for their **quarterly** emergency responses according to the following scale.
   1. Individuals responding to up to 20% of all calls for which they are qualified to respond, will receive $5.00 per call.
   2. 21%-40% of all calls = $6.00 per call.
   3. 41%-60% of all calls = $7.00 per call.
   4. 61%-100% of all calls = $8.00 per call.
   5. ...

Current Policy Concerns

- Does not *incentivize* members in a way that benefits EMS. Current incentive is to respond to as many calls as possible. Unlike fire/rescue calls where numerous personnel are required, most EMS calls require only 2 people.
- Is not realistic for members to achieve. With current call volume >1,600 calls per year, that means quarterly volume is >400. 61% of 400 is 244. A member would need to attend nearly 3 calls a day to reach 61% - this is not a reasonable expectation for a volunteer. Why incentivize something unreasonable?
- The quarterly emergency response count includes responses members are not able to respond to, including calls to Crystal Lake (Crystal Lake Fire holds the R1), and mutual aid. As such, it isn't possible to make 100% of calls, even if a member was willing to.
- Members living out of town, who cannot reasonably first respond to calls, cannot benefit the same as someone in town.

Proposed Updated Policy

A. Emergency services personnel shall receive incentives for their **quarterly** emergency responses according to the following scale.
   1. Individuals shall receive points based on their emergency response volume.
      a. Individuals responding to 21%-40% of all calls for which they are qualified to respond, will receive 1 point.
      b. Individuals responding to 41%-60%, 2 points.
      c. Individuals responding to >61%, 3 points.
   2. Individuals shall receive points based on their scheduled duty time.
      a. Individuals with 126-161 duty hours in a quarter shall receive 1 point.
      b. Individuals with 162-197 duty hours, 2 points.
      c. Individuals with >198 duty hours, 3 points.
   3. Individuals shall accumulate no more than 3 points total in a quarter.
   4. Individuals with 0 points will receive $5.00 per call.
   5. 1 point = $6.00 per call.
   6. 2 points = $7.00 per call.
   7. 3 points = $8.00 per call.
   8. ...

Proposed Policy Benefits

- Leaves current incentive scale in place.
- Creates an incentive for taking additional duty time above and beyond the minimum requirements. EMS benefits when members take duty time more than when multiple members respond to a call.
- Provides multiple options for members of each department to participate and be incentivized. Some may be able to respond to more calls, while others may be able to take more duty shifts.
- Provides a realistic possibility for EVAC members to reach higher incentive levels.
- Increased volunteer duty hours will decrease reliance on per diem/paid staff hours.
    - At $17.75/hour, a 12 hour per diem shift costs $213. A volunteer shift is $12 ($1/hr). Average number of responses per volunteer is 35/quarter. Given that, potential cost savings for a single volunteer shift versus paid is $166-201.